

# Wild

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

**Spring**  
(October–December) 1993, no  
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# 50

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Runner-up 1992

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# Wild

AUSTRALIAN WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

Established 1981

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# GOING FOR THE TOP

The next 50 issues of *Wild*

**M**ajor anniversaries are traditionally times of reflection on the past, perhaps tempered with the expression of hopes for the future. I'll spare you both—or will I?

*Wild*'s founding charter, widely announced in print before the first issue, is that it be 'a regular magazine of professional quality, written by and for those who actively participate—in the bush, mountains, wild rivers and caves of Australia and New Zealand. *Wild* is a celebration of our wild places.' Fifty issues on, in one sense nothing has changed. In another sense, a great deal has, and the pace of change is accelerating.

With the tenth anniversary issue (no 40), *Wild* was completely redesigned. Since then, this process has been extended, perhaps less obviously, to all other aspects of the magazine, and will continue. There is constant reassessment of *Wild*'s goals and progress towards them. As we plan to be around for the long run, the original goals have been re-examined and reconfirmed: participation, specialization (in the Australian rucksack sports), quality and conservation.

How we seek to achieve these goals has been subject to major review for several issues. Some of the changes resulting from this ongoing process were described in the Editorial in issue 48. Since then, there have been others: the contents page has been redesigned to make it clearer; more (and more interesting and varied) photos have been added to Wild Information, Green Pages, Equipment and Reviews; the Wild Diary is being expanded; the range of environmental correspondents is being widened considerably; 'fact boxes' have been added to most feature articles to enhance their practical value; there is now a portrait of and information on the Folio photographer; and Reviews carry headings to group material reviewed. You'll notice that even the photo policy of the Editorial has been revised!

These changes, all designed to make *your* magazine better, you can see immediately. The major changes, however, are not so readily apparent. From the outset we have been preoccupied (some would say obsessed!) with quality. With the arrival of our new Editor, Sara White, we have launched a long-term quest to raise the quality of the writing that appears in *Wild*. We are tackling this enormous and complex task in a variety of ways: better planning and instruction of writers by us, further encouraging and working with Australia's best rucksack sports writers. We have also introduced an annual award of \$750, the *Wild* Article of the Year Award, for the article which *Wild*'s Editor and Directors consider to have made the greatest contribution to the standard of writing in *Wild* for the year.

Speaking of awards, we're proud to announce that we are sponsoring Brigitte

Muir (see the profile of her and husband Jon which starts on page 52) in her attempt this year on Mt Everest as part of her quest to be the first Australian to climb the highest peak on every continent (and be the first Australian woman to climb Mt Everest). Brigitte, part of an international expedition which also includes Jon, is on Mt Everest as you read this, attempting to climb the mountain from Tibet, by the classic North Ridge—scene of the earliest attempts to reach the highest point on earth and a route not yet climbed by an Australian. We'll keep you posted.

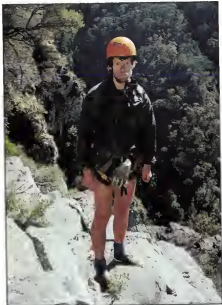
Recent improvements in computerized printing technology can result in better colour printing. We have received many plaudits for the way *Wild* looks and are determined to ensure that its production quality is the best

possible benefits well beyond our own lifetime. I have also worked with the Australian Conservation Foundation on its subscription system and in August we made a donation of \$3000 to that worthwhile organization which, like others, is feeling the recession.

In the last issue I mentioned that Nick Tapp has left *Wild* for an extended world trip and has been replaced by Sara White. Already Nick has sought to destabilize office morale by reporting a superb skiing trip in California's Sierra Nevada mountains with regular *Wild* correspondent Peter Campbell. And to rub salt in the wound, he also announced plans to join



John Chapman is a campsite name among Australian bushwalkers. Chapman collection. Right, canyoning legend David Noble at Kananra Falls, New South Wales. Noble collection



Wild Director and co-founder Michael Collier, who is now based in Buenos Aires, on a mountaineering adventure in Patagonia at the end of the year. We hope to bring you details from our 'roving reporters' as they come to hand.

possible at all times. In this connection we have been undertaking a major audit of our printing quality to make certain that it continues to be what renowned wilderness photographer David Tatnall described as '...the benchmark...'

On the conservation front, you are already aware of increased coverage and of recent donations to environmental groups. One of the latest of these, to the Wilderness Society, was \$3500 which we paid in May as sponsorship for the Antarctic education kit the society is producing for secondary-school students. We regard this as extremely important educational work that will, we hope, have

It is fitting that this 50th issue includes major articles by two of our long-standing, most prolific and highly regarded contributors. John Chapman, a regular contributor from our very first issue, is a household (campsite?) name among Australian bushwalkers. His meticulously researched books of track notes, particularly for Tasmania, have set thousands of walkers 'on the right track' even if they can never match his recommended walking times! A computer-studies lecturer in Melbourne, John spends most of his spare time walking in the wildest corners of his beloved Tassie, and elsewhere. Similarly, David Noble is something of a bushwalking and canyoning legend. A Contributing Editor since our second issue, he is perhaps Australia's most widely published

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Publisher Wild Publications Pty Ltd

ACN 006 748 938

Printing York Press

Colour Reproduction Scanagraph Pty Ltd

Typesetting Supertype Pty Ltd

and York Press

Distribution Gordon and Gotch Limited

Subscription rates are currently \$25.95 for

one year (four issues), \$47.95 for two years,

or \$68.00 for three years, by surface mail to

addresses in Australia. Add \$7.00 for each

four issues to overseas addresses.

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Advertising rates are available on request.

Copy deadlines (advertising and editorial):

8 October (summer issue), 15 January

(autumn), 15 April (winter), 15 July (spring).

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Contributions, preferably well illustrated

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those of the publisher.

Editorial, advertising, subscription,

distribution and general

correspondence to:

Wild Publications Pty Ltd, P.O. Box 415,

Phrahan, Vic 3181, Australia.

Phone (03) 826 8482

Fax (03) 826 3782

Wild is published quarterly in the middle of

the month before cover date (cover dates:

Jan-Mar, Apr-Jun, Jul-Sep, Oct-Dec) by Wild

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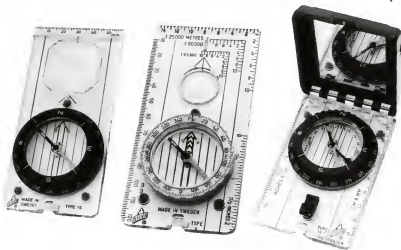
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## EDITORIAL

writer and photographer on bushwalking and canyoning. No stranger to hard walking in Tasmania and further afield, his first love are the Blue Mountains, which lie almost on his doorstep near his Sydney home. David also finds time to be a teacher.



Brigitte Muir hopes to be the first Australian woman to climb Mt Everest. *Wild* is a sponsor for her climb. *Jon Muir*

If you think that John Chapman and David Noble are 'old hands' in the bushwalking game, they are mere pups beside two other contributors to this issue. There are very few living Australians who are true bushwalking pioneers. But John Béchervaise and Warren Bonython can be so described. Renowned author and Antarctic explorer, John is well known to bushwalkers for his first ascent of Tasmania's Federation Peak in 1949. Warren is similarly renowned, but for his contribution to the arts and for his walk across the Simpson Desert in 1973, among other things. It's reassuring to me, as Managing Editor, to know that we have a contributor network of such unequalled experience, depth and breadth.

To mark our 50th issue we've printed a new poster—a spectacular winter scene showing the Viking beyond a sunlit Devils Staircase in the heart of the Victorian Alps. We think it's the best poster we've published. It's not for sale but available only to people ordering a three-year subscription (for themselves or as a gift)...while stocks last!

Finally, the *really* good news is that there is no bad news. *Wild's* cover price, which has been unchanged for almost three years despite growth in the size of the magazine over that period, will remain unchanged, and no increase is planned. Similarly, not withstanding a significant growth in circulation, *Wild's* advertising rates have been unchanged for three years, and here no increase is planned either. These savings, which we are happy to pass on to readers and advertisers alike, are in no small part due to good management practices, which have been recognized in business awards in each of the last two years.

As ever, I look forward to meeting you along the track. ■

Chris Baxter

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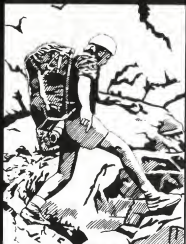
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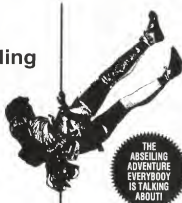
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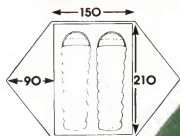
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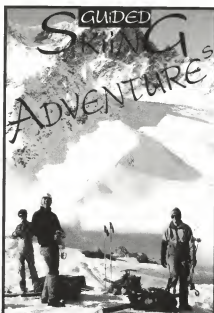
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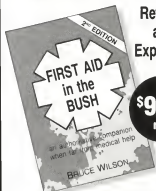
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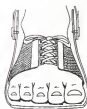
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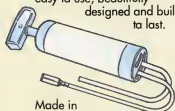
# THE PADDY PALLIN UPDATE

September–November 1993

**W**elcome to the latest edition of the Paddy Pallin Update. It's our way of letting you know about all the latest product developments and activities available through your Paddy Pallin store.

## PUR-IFICATION

In the outdoors or when you're travelling, the last thing you need is sickness from contaminated water. Pur are the only pump-action purifiers that render water biologically safe. Each model will remove or kill all micro-organisms, including cysts (such as giardia), viruses and bacteria. Pur purifiers are easy to use, beautifully designed and built to last.



Made in the USA and registered with that country's Environmental Protection Agency, Pur models are **Traveller \$149**, **Explorer \$299** and **Scout (illustrated) \$149**.

## MAXIMUM COMFORT

We think Wigwam's Ultimax model is the most comfortable, practical outdoor sack we've tried. The Ultimax actually draws perspiration up from the sole of your foot and out of your footwear, where it evaporates. Feet stay drier and chafing, burning and blisters become a thing of the past.

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## GORE-TEX...NEW!

The Tharah is the latest addition to our Gore-Tex range. Specifically built for the budget-minded bushwalker, it features two bellows hand-warmer pockets, a broad storm-flap over the full-length front zip, seamless shoulders for comfort when wearing a rucksack, as well as a hood with stiffened visor. There is also a draw-card waist. The Tharah is available in sizes XS–XL and colours Mid-Blue and Tundra.

**Paddy Pallin Tharah Gore-Tex Jacket \$299.**

## IT'S TIME TO GET ONE...

Do you have our 1993 catalogue? It's one of the most comprehensive you'll find, with **64-pages of outdoor and travel products in full colour, and it's FREE.** To get your catalogue just phone your closest Paddy Pallin store or call toll free 008 805 398.



## SIERRA DESIGNS HOOP-LA

The Sierra Designs Hoop 3 has one of the roomiest interiors for its weight of any tent available. It's a breeze to erect and an excellent choice for three-season bushwalking. The best news is its weight of 2.66 kg. **Sierra Designs Hoop 3 \$499.**

## TERRIFIC TASSY

Planning a trip to the Apple Isle? Don't miss our in-store Tasmanian promotion during October. There are all kinds of interesting displays, travel information and even an adventure holiday to be won. Note: Promotion in selected stores only.

## HEAD FOR COMFORT

The **Mont Bell Compact Pillow** may be the answer to your prayers. From a minute stuff-sack springs a



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This is the shoe for scrambling, mountain biking, walking, or just around town. **Five Tennies \$179.**



## Olang Verde

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*Paddy Pallin*

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# EVEREST

Triumph and tragedy on Australian expedition

## Groom makes it three

The international Mt Everest expedition led by Tashi Tenzing and reported in *Wild* no 49 succeeded in putting two members on the 8872 metre summit. Brisbane's Michael Groom and Lobsang Tenzing made the ascent in May. Unlike Groom, Tenzing was using artificial oxygen, but tragically fell to his death during the descent. The seventh Australian to climb to the highest point on earth, Groom is the first to have climbed three 8000 metre peaks. (The other two are Kangchenjunga and Cho Oyu.)

Geoff Butcher, his brother Stephen, Graeme Hoxley and Alex McConnell set out for southern South America in February on an expedition that was to be a west-east crossing of the larger of Patagonia's two ice-caps, the fourth largest body of ice and snow in the world. However, on reaching the ice-cap proper they soon discovered about 40 kilometres of crevasses that stretched out into the heart of the ice-cap.

The men were stranded when a fishing-boat failed to pick them up after they had abandoned the crossing. They were 350



On the Patagonian ice-cap—scene of the Australian epic—looking towards the west side of Mt Lautaro. Geoff Butcher. Right, Michael Groom on Mt Everest during his ascent. Groom collection

## Awards for Australian Everest film

An Australian documentary film featuring the first successful Australian ascent of Mt Everest has won the Grand Prize for best film at two international film festivals of Mountain and Adventure films.

The film 'Everest—Sea to Summit', produced by Sydney film-maker Michael Dillon and featuring Australian climber Tim Macartney-Snape, was awarded the Grand Prix at the eighth International Film and Video Festival of Adventure and Sports in Hakuba, Japan, and on the same day won the Gold Gentian for best film at the 41st International Film Festival of Mountain, Exploration and Adventure Films in Trento, Italy.

## Patagonian survival

Four Australians survived being stranded for ten days in an icy wilderness in southern Chile.

kilometres from a fishing village which is the only pocket of civilization in 1000 kilometres of remote Chilean coastline.

So began a 10-day journey through mountains and thickets along the coast to a point at which the channel narrows to less than five kilometres; they hoped to hail a passing vessel. At one river-crossing they leapt between icebergs and survived falls into the freezing water. It was sheer luck that they met a fisherman who was logging timber along the fjord and who returned them to the village.

Geoff Butcher

## Makalu challenge

A group of Australians, including Michael Groom, are at present attempting to be the first Australians to climb the fifth-highest mountain in the world—Makalu.

At 8463 metres, Makalu is one of the least climbed and most technically difficult of all the great Himalayan peaks. The Australian team will attempt the ascent by the difficult West Ridge route. In all, they expect to spend 50 days in roped climbing above their Base Camp at 5100 metres.



## Eungella II

ANZES is seeking people aged 17 to 25 to join a one-month scientific expedition to Eungella National Park. Starting on 13 December, expedition Eungella II will explore and study the unique forests of Eungella, west of Mackay in north Queensland. The data collected will be used by the Queensland Department of Environment & Heritage to prepare plans for the protection of rare and threatened species. Contact Fern Hames—telephone (03) 690 5455.

## Corrections and amplifications

Davenport was misspelt in the box on page 46 of *Wild* no 49.

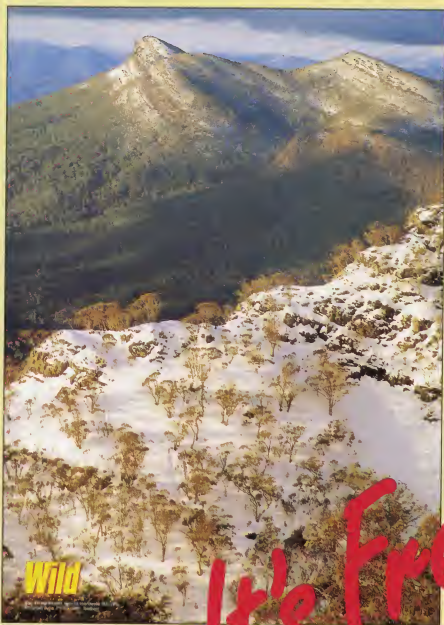
## NEW SOUTH WALES

### 50 peaks

On the weekend of 17–18 April, 75 teams set out to climb 50 different NSW and ACT mountain peaks to celebrate the Youth Hostel Association NSW's 50th anniversary. The event was a non-competitive community activity designed to reflect YHA's long-standing connection with outdoor recreation and National Parks.

Teams came from all over the State and a modest entry fee raised \$1000 for the NSW

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**Wild**  
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Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs' Search and Rescue service. Organizers, who included Peter Treseder and Greg Mortimer, chose peaks that would represent the diverse scenery and terrain of the State. Climbs ranged from modest day walks like Mt Kosciuszko and Pigeon House to challenging weekend trips such as Mt Mistake and Gaspers Mountain.



'Care to try the wine, Sir?' Dinner party on the summit of the Castle, Budawangs, New South Wales, as part of the Youth Hostels Association 50 Peaks weekend. *Duncan McIntyre. Right, crack—possibly caused by mining—in rock pagoda, upper Bungleboori Creek, Blue Mountains, NSW. David Noble*

Nearly all teams reached their summit by 11 am on the Sunday. A large crowd gathered at Echo Point, in the Blue Mountains, to see 82-year-old Dot Butler accompanied by Peter Treseder climb the Three Sisters. For Treseder, this was his 50th peak in eight days, as he set out and conquered all the designated peaks in 197 hours.

One group enjoyed a complete formal meal, with dinner-suits and ball-gowns, table and candles, violin music and champagne, on the summit of the Castle.

*Janet McGarry*

#### Ettema access blocked

Bushwalkers have been using Quiera Clearing on the Tolwong road, west of Ettema Gorge, as a parking area for many years. The clearing is a freehold block owned by the Rolfe family. There have previously been few objections to bushwalkers parking along the roadside at the clearing. Recently the amount of rubbish left in the area has increased and the landowners have been concerned that the glass, metal and plastic could pose a danger to their stock.

While assuring the owners that bushwalking club members are unlikely to have been responsible, the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs is calling for bushwalkers to park outside the clearing. They believe this may help to draw attention to the real culprits. An alternative parking site for those intending

to travel down Myall Creek is on the Tolwong road near the high point 764 (GR *Touga* 407240). This site has parking for at least ten vehicles. An easy ridge leads to Myall Creek. There is also access to Sentry Box Canyon by Churinga Head.

Bushwalkers using the Tolwong road should be careful not to park on private land along the road and should avoid leaving

rubbish in the area. Reports of people littering in the Morton National Park or on private land should be passed on to the confederation or the National Parks & Wildlife Service office in Nowra.

*Roger Lembit*

#### Emergency navigation

The 1993 Emergency Services Navigation Shield has been won by a team from Span Outdoors Bushwalking Club. The rogaine is organized annually by the Search and Rescue section of the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs. This year's event was held on the western side of the Newnes Plateau, an area of fire tracks, wild pigs, slot canyons and swamps. The course was set by members of Springwood Bushwalking Club. One checkpoint in a canyon surrounded by sandstone pagodas was likened by participants to Jurassic Park.

A team from Kangaroo Valley Bushfire Brigade finished second a bare margin ahead of a group from Sutherland Bushwalking Club. There were 68 teams competing. Emergency service groups represented included Police, State Emergency Service, Army, Air Force, Bushfire Brigades and Volunteer Rescue Association Squads.

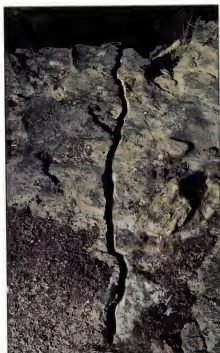
Next year's event will take place on the weekend of 25-26 June. Information can be obtained by writing to the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs, GPO Box 2090, Sydney, NSW 2001.

#### Underground coal extraction—bushwalkers' concern

There are controversial plans at present for coal-mining beneath Mt Airly, which is to the

west of Wollemi National Park. Bushwalkers and conservationists feel that coal-mining will lead to cliff collapse and damage to the intricate rock pagodas that are found in this area. There have been many examples of cliff collapse occurring due to subsidence caused by mines near Lithgow.

Recently bushwalkers were horrified to find some cracked pagodas in the headwaters of the south branch of Bungleboori Creek. This part of the area is at present subject to coal-mining from the Clarence colliery. Both this area and Mt Airly are parts of the 'Gardens of Stone' proposed additions to Wollemi National Park.



#### VICTORIA

##### Poor prospects for future snow-cover

Climate modelling by CSIRO's Division of Atmospheric Research has produced results that indicate potentially much less snow-cover in years to come. In its recent Annual Report on the Regional Impact of the Enhanced Greenhouse Effect on Victoria, the division presents climate modelling results indicating that 'simulated snow-cover duration' would drop substantially with even small increases in temperature for all six of the locations in the Victorian Alps for which it modelled climate data. For example, for only a one degree centigrade increase in temperature, the predicted simulated snow-cover duration would fall from a current 79 days for Mt Baw Baw to less than 30 days. Equivalent figures for other locations were Mt Hotham, 127 to 76-100 days; Mt Featherston, 155 to 113-134 days; Falls Creek 143 to 100-120 days; Mt Bogong, 158 to 115-136 days; and Mt Buffalo, 81 to less than 30 days—figures which make one question further ski 'development'.

##### Fitzgeralds Hut rebuilt

The old Fitzgeralds Hut was destroyed by fire at the end of 1991 (see Information in *Wild* no

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44) and it has now been rebuilt by a team led by Ian Stapleton (of Mittagundi fame). It is sited slightly differently from the original, and the door is on the opposite side. It has a bright red roof and the uprights and walls are of solid red gum railway sleepers. The huge stone fireplace has a wide hearth and there's a notice warning people of the dangers of over-large fires.

#### Ass stonished

While collecting water down the side of a hill during a four-day bushwalking trip in the Victorian Alps, Stephen Hamilton and Tim Burke were startled to come across a wild donkey searching for the same watering hole.

#### Losing ground

The July issue of *Corporate Scouts* announces that Victorian Rovers have officially opened

their new [private] campsite...near Yea with a successful "Mud Bash" weekend". (Rover Scouts had received criticism concerning the environmental impact of this motor-sport event following information published in *Wild* no 27.)

#### TASMANIA

##### Exit Cave quarry rehabilitated

After a year of frantic campaigning by the Wilderness Society and the Australian

1994 in Hobart. The organizers of the congress, the Denver-based Adventure Travel Society, selected Hobart over rival bidder Adelaide on the basis of the strong support for the Tasmanian bid by the Wilderness Society and the Tasmanian Greens. The congress will concentrate on issues relating to the management and protection of natural areas and the development of an ecotourism industry based upon regions such as the Western Tasmania World Heritage Area.

BB



The official opening of the Heysen Trail, Adelaide Hills, South Australia: Terry Lavender, designer of the trail, left; Premier Lynn Arnold; Fiona Heysen, granddaughter of Hans Heysen; and Warren Bonython, who campaigned for the trail for many years. (See Reflections.) Bruce Macdonald

Speleological Federation, the Exit Cave quarry in the Western Tasmania World Heritage Area has finally been closed by the Federal Government. Exit Cave is arguably Australia's longest cave, with more than 21 kilometres of explored passages. The first phase of the rehabilitation programme for the quarry, which aims to prevent sediments being washed into the cave system, is now approaching completion and the ongoing monitoring programme has been established.

Bob Burton

##### Mt Wellington cable-car plan revived

A proposal for a cable-car, restaurant and ski field on Mt Wellington above Hobart has been revived. It is proposed that a three-storey restaurant be built atop the Organ Pipes, a popular climbing spot. The proposal is encountering strong opposition from local residents and conservation groups. Previous proposals for the cable-car evaporated in the face of local opposition but the current proposal appears more determined than past efforts.

BB

##### Ecotourism congress announced

The World Ecotourism and Adventure Travel Congress has been announced for October

##### WHA management

The Western Tasmania World Heritage Area is coming under increasing pressure from the Traditional and Recreational Land Users Federation (TRLUF) to allow horse-riding on the February Plains and Walls of Jerusalem National Park. TRLUF, a coalition of recreation groups such as four-wheel-drivers and hunters, has opposed restrictions on its activities in the World Heritage Management Plan. Even more unexpectedly, TRLUF proposed that a part of the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park be revoked, a move rejected by the Tasmanian Minister for Parks & Wildlife, Mr Cleary. TRLUF, however, has come under increasing attention from conservationists for its refusal to oppose mining in National Parks and being in favour of revocation of the Lemonythine Forest from the National Park.

BB

##### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

##### Heysen Trail completed

As early as 1947, Helen Black, the Assistant Director of the National Fitness Council in South Australia, advocated a series of walking tracks in the Mt Lofty Ranges. During the next 20 years she collected maps and information and convened a series of meetings. At one of these meetings, in 1969, Warren Bonython proposed the concept of a long-distance walking track from Cape Jervis to the northern Flinders Ranges along the spine of the Mt Lofty and Flinders Ranges.

## Wild Diary

### 1993

September	18	Victorian Marathon Canoeing Championship	Vic	(03) 459 4277
October	2	Spring 8/24-hour Rogaine	Vic	(03) 489 4029
	2	Slalom races C	Vic	(03) 459 4277
	5	Strling Silver Series Family Fun Race S	Vic	(057) 77 5731
	5-8	Ski & Outdoor Trade Show	ACT	(05) 482 1206
	9-10	Fourth National Wilderness Conference	NSW	(02) 252 4975
	9-10	Victorian Climbing Club (VCC) beginners' course RC	Vic	(03) 428 5298
	15-16	ACF proficiency test C NSW	NSW	(02) 809 6993
	16-17	Second Victorian Mountain Running Championships	Vic	(057) 74 7576
	30	Lake Macquarie 12-hour Rogaine	NSW	(02) 3897 2270
	30-31	Hawkesbury Classic Paddle C	NSW	(02) 520 5634
November	6-7	VCC beginners' course RC	Vic	(03) 428 5298
	13	Spring 8/12-hour Rogaine	Vic	(03) 489 4029
	27-28	Victorian Slalom Canoeing Championships	Vic	(03) 459 4277
	27-28	VCC beginners' course RC	Vic	(03) 428 5298
December	4-5	Canoe Polo—Pan Pacific	NSW	(02) 562 4500
	11-12	Pacific Canoe Polo Championships	Vic	(03) 459 4277

### 1994

January	1	Derwent Slalom Descent C	Tas	(02) 562 4500
	11-16	Australian Canoeing Championships	Tas	(02) 562 4500
	23	Slalom International C	Tas	(02) 562 4500
February	11-12	Speight's Coast to Coast M	NZ	(64 3) 26 5493
	19-20	State Sprint Championships C	NSW	(02) 562 4500
	26-27	Victorian Sprint Canoeing Championship	Vic	(03) 459 4277
March	15-17	Australian Sprint Canoeing Championship	NSW	(02) 562 4500
	26-27	Victorian Canoe Polo Championships	Vic	(03) 459 4277

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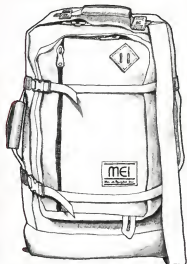
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Those dreams have now been realized. The 1500 kilometre Heysen Trail has been completed and a commemorative plaque unveiled by the Premier of South Australia, Lynn Arnold, at a ceremony in the Adelaide Hills on 4 April.

Among the official guests was Fiona Heysen. The name of the track was chosen in recognition of the work of her grandfather, Hans Heysen, who portrayed his love of the

## WILD INFORMATION

Josef. These three can be easily viewed from the road. However, the Brewster and the Snowball, both shelf-glaciers, are in South Westland and can be visited only by strong tramping and climbing parties.

Geoff Wyatt

### Greenlink to Middle Earth

Some of the sting has gone out of the tail of Greenlink, one of New Zealand's most famous



New Zealand's Erica Beuzenberg on the summit of FitzRoy, Patagonia, during the fourth (and first by a woman) winter ascent of this dramatic summit. Gottlieb Braun-Elwert

Mt Lofty and Flinders Ranges through his paintings.

Terry Lavender of the Department of Recreation & Sport designed and developed the Heysen Trail which offers long-distance bushwalking for experienced walkers to half-day trips for novices.

Bruce Macdonald

### OVERSEAS

#### Stamp of recognition

The recent issue of six glacier stamps by the New Zealand post has highlighted the significance of the country's glaciation. There are 3150 glaciers surveyed with only two existing in the North Island. A snow-patch must survive for 10-20 years before being considered a glacier.

Of the glaciers featured, the Tasman is the longest in the temperate region (29 kilometres). It is a compound glacier fed by many tributaries. The Westland's Fox Glacier drops to 245 metres above sea-level and is only 25 kilometres from the equally dramatic Franz

sporting caves. Exploration trips took on mammoth proportions when after numerous wet pitches, the two sumps at -287 metres were dived to reveal a further 44 metre pitch and several rock-piles before the cave terminated. Free-diving these two sumps proved a great psychological barrier for most cavers and round trips to the bottom took about 18 hours. Now cavers are spared the ordeal. A recent connection from Middle Earth, discovered by Lyndsay Main, reduces the time for a bottoming trip to a mere hour and a half.

Stephen Burton

#### FitzRoy ascent

On 17 June New Zealanders Erica Beuzenberg (profiled in *Wild* no 38) and Gottlieb Braun-Elwert reached the summit of FitzRoy in Patagonia, South America. FitzRoy is regarded as one of the more difficult mountains in the world. No Australian has reached the summit in summer or winter. The 17 June ascent was the fourth winter ascent overall and the first time it was climbed by a woman in winter. ■

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahara, Victoria 3181.



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# CHAIN-SAW MASSACRE

Logging—an environmental and economic nightmare

## New assault on Tasmania's South-west

While the Federal Government turns a blind eye to conservation issues, the Tasmanian Forestry Commission is wasting no time. The commission is planning a major assault on the forests of Tasmania's South-west this summer.

These plans have significant implications for recreational users of the South-west. Logging will adversely affect both rafters and bushwalkers.

Rafters on the Picton River will now hear bulldozers and chain-saws. During the months of February to April, they may also be rafting through clouds of smoke from the commission's 'controlled regeneration burns'. This is because the commission will be logging three coupes close to the Picton River downstream from the bridge from where most Picton journeys start. The forest to be logged in the next two or three summers occupies nearly 300 hectares.

Of similar concern to bushwalkers is the commission's proposal to log in the Huon valley, well upstream from its junction with the Picton. These are wilderness forests. The commission plans to extend the Riveaux Road by some three to four kilometres in order to gain access to hundreds of hectares of virgin forest.

North of the Huon, the commission intends to log the coupe 'Blakes One', less than three kilometres from Blakes Opening.

These new roads and logging coupes are the beginnings of a programme of logging aimed at extracting tall trees from the forests of the Huon as far up as Blakes Opening. All the logging planned is for clear-felling and burning—usually done in blocks of between 50 and 120 hectares. (One hundred hectares are a square kilometre.) Logging is already under way adjacent to Farmhouse Creek, the other eastern access route to Federation Peak.

This proposed road extension and logging would wipe out a large tract of wilderness, make redundant several kilometres of the historic Huon Track, bring vehicle traffic deeper into the South-west and cause massive scarring of the landscape. Mt Picton would be hemmed in on three sides by logging and roads. The remoteness of the Crocroft River and Eastern Arthur Range would be reduced.

All this is happening at a time when the commission can barely sell existing cut timber. The international woodchip market is so slow that the commission has produced a document entitled 'District Strategies for Wasting Pulpwood'. Among other things, this quaintly titled document says that much of the pulp timber will be left behind in National Estate areas (possibly to be burnt at a later stage), and that the pulpwood which can be sold will go at half-price.



Clear-felling and burning in the Picton valley. Ted Mead. Right, the Wog Way Road protest in September 1989, Coolangubra. Glenda Orr

## South-east forests of New South Wales

After 20 years of conflict in the forests of south-eastern New South Wales, we are on the verge of a moratorium on logging 90 000 hectares of old-growth and wilderness forests. The South-east Forests Protection Bill passed through the Lower House of the New South Wales Parliament in May and will be debated in the Upper House in September. Two people, Fred and Elaine Nile, will decide the vote in the Upper House.



The commission's loss of revenue means that this magnificent tract of the South-west will probably be destroyed at a loss to the taxpayer as well. (See Editorial, Wild no 49.)

The Federal Government has the power and responsibility to protect these areas. Threatened forests in the Picton, Weld and Huon catchments have been identified as having World Heritage qualities by the World Heritage Bureau, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Australian Heritage Commission. This means that the Federal Government can employ the same powers it used to protect the Franklin River to save this part of the South-west. See Action Box item 1.

Geoff Law

## Forestry Commission logging and roading plan, 1992-93 to 94-95



- Existing road
- Roads to be built 1992-93 season
- Roads to be built 1993-94 season
- Huon Track
- Coupe being logged 1992-93
- Coupe to be logged after 1992-93 season
- Forests that were in the Hartz Mountains National Park until 1979
- National Park and World Heritage area boundary proposed by ACF and TWS



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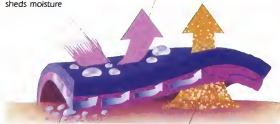
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The region contains one of the most diverse temperate forests in the world, with nearly twice the number of eucalypt species as the Kosciusko region, as many plant species as Kakadu and more species of higher plants than the Wet Tropics. The forest contains critical habitat for over 40 species of threatened animals, which include the koala, the long-footed potoroo and the powerful owl. Its wild rivers inspire—tree-fern-shaded streams



Bushwalkers take in the scenic beauty of Mt Matanah, Coolangubra, New South Wales. Bruce Diekmann. Right, Coolangubra State Forest today. Russell Good

wander among dense forest glades before falling through spectacular and infrequently visited granite gorges.

However, the logging for woodchips continues, threatening all these values.

The Bill enables the creation of National Parks in the moratorium area by the end of 1995. It also sets up a regional employment and industry adjustment committee which will develop strategies for alternative employment in the region. Developments in existing softwood plantations and ecotourism are predicted to easily absorb the 120 workers who may be affected when the parks are created. See Action Box item 2.

Fiona McCrossin

### Report condemns Victorian timber industry

In assessing the merits of the State Government's Timber Industry Strategy, the Auditor General's Report, tabled in Parliament in mid-May, concluded that the industry is heavily subsidised by Victorian taxpayers; royalties and licence fees paid to the Victorian Government are not adequate and should be revised; high-quality logs are being downgraded and woodchipped; pre-logging surveys of flora and fauna are not routine procedure for native forest operations; the definition and protection of rain forest in Victoria is not adequate. The only area of forestry identified as operating with some efficiency was the softwood plantation sector.

The government and the timber industry have continually denied claims of mismanagement.

East Gippsland forest management runs at the largest loss—3.7 million dollars for 1991–92 (native State forest revenue for the year ending June 1992). Each year up to 6000 hectares of East Gippsland are cleared (that's 16 football fields a day) to supply 930 000 cubic metres of various grades of timber and thinnings. About 174 000 cubic metres of this are C-plus or sawlog-grade logs. Regeneration levels are down by 80 per cent—four out of

five coupes are not growing back. Half of the forest that remains in East Gippsland is producing such a low timber yield that 77 per cent of trees cut down end up as woodchips or are left to rot when they cannot be sold.

Despite the mismanagement and unsustainable logging practices in East Gippsland's native forests, the fact that softwoods are increasingly replacing native forest timbers for sawlogs and that the pulp market is internationally depressed, the State Government is proposing a pulp mill for the region. Environmental groups claim that the proposal is designed to divert attention from depleted forests, poor management and financial loss. See the Editorial in *Wild* no 49 and Action Box item 3.

### EPA reviews forestry licences

Pollution licences for forestry operations are being reviewed by the Environment Protection Authority to make certain that water quality is protected. The EPA is responsible for ensuring that the impact of forestry operations on water catchments is minimized. In the past uncontrolled soil erosion has had a devastating impact on ecosystems (see below). In light of environmental concerns, the EPA has issued only interim licences for a three-month period. This will allow time to consider how best to apply the new Standard Erosion Mitigation Guidelines for Logging.

### Logging to dry Delegate River

The EPA's licensing review may be too late for the Delegate River at Tea-tree Swamp in East Gippsland. By measuring the flow of streams which drain catchments of differing forest ages, hydrologists have determined that soon after clear-felling or wildfire the water yielded

begins to decrease. It continues decreasing for about 25 years as the regenerating vegetation consumes the rainfall.

Rob Wilby, from Loughborough University in the UK, has been studying the impact of clear-felling (up to 1988) on the Delegate River catchment. He found that by 1987–88, 55 per cent of the stream's water yield at Tea-tree Swamp was consumed by regenerating eucalyptus. Furthermore, all the water normally yielded in average (or drier) years will be consumed by regenerating forests before 2005.

In an article published in the April–May issue of *Potoroo Review* (environment newsletter of Concerned Residents of East Gippsland), Peter Gell from Monash University argues that the government and the timber industry are on notice in two ways. First, there are plans to log four more coupes within the Delegate River catchment in the near future. This will prolong the period of



reduced flow and increase the risk of the swamp drying. Secondly, Tea-tree Swamp has sufficient botanical qualities to be of national significance. It warrants consideration under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act.

### Softwood sawmill go-ahead

The Wilderness Society held a demonstration outside the Melbourne offices of the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources to congratulate the State Government on announcing the new softwood sawmill facilities in Portland and unlocking 20 000 hectares of the States' pine plantations.

The new sawmill highlights the dichotomy that exists between native forestry operations and the plantation sector. The plantation sector reported a profit of \$4 million in 1990–91 whereas the native forest sector ran at a \$13.2 million loss.

### Ecofabric

The first commercial textile fabric to be made of recycled plastic bottles has been released in the USA. In a joint venture Wellman, the USA's largest recycler of plastics and the manufacturer of Fortrel polyester and Dyersburg fabrics, together with outdoor-clothing manufacturer Patagonia have developed a fleece fabric called Fortrel EcoSpun, which is made totally from recycled plastic drink bottles. A double-sided velour fleece, this fabric is a blend of 80 per cent EcoSpun and 20 per cent Fortrel filament. The fabric is best suited for rugged outerwear garments.

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## Climate change

The CSIRO has released new climate change scenarios, prepared by the Climate Impact Group (reported in the May issue of *Climate Change Newsletter*) at the Division of Atmospheric Research, which suggest

## Action Box

Readers can take action on the following matters covered in Green Pages in this issue.

**1** To help save threatened forests in the Pictou, Weld and Huon catchments, write to the Federal Minister for the Environment, Ros Kelly, Parliament House, Canberra 2600.

**2** To help save the forests of south-eastern New South Wales, write to Rev Fred Nile, Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney, NSW 2000.

**3** For further information on logging in the East Gippsland, contact Fenella Barry at the Wilderness Society in Melbourne—telephone (03) 670 5229; or Jill Redwood, spokesperson for Concerned Residents of East Gippsland—telephone (051) 54 0145. Alternatively, ring the minister's office and ask Mr Coleman what steps he is taking to supply the timber industry with the mechanisms and policies to facilitate a transition into plantations.

**4** Send your suggested wilderness areas, describing location, topography, geology, flora and fauna and special features, together with a map (or sketch) of location, suggested boundaries and existing land usage, to the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd, Gloucester Walk, 88 Cumberland St, Sydney, NSW 2000. Telephone—(02) 247 4714.

**5** For more information on the Fourth National Wilderness Conference, contact the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd (details above).

**6** To help protect the Gouldian finch, write to the Environment Minister, Ros Kelly, Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600. Ask what the Recovery Team has achieved in the past four months and whether she will guarantee that the \$100 000 allocated will be spent on protecting breeding sites as well as on more research.

**7** If you want to know more about how you can help on the coral-spawning project or one of the 160 other projects, telephone Jane Gilmour or Matilda Leone at Earthwatch, (03) 600 9100.

**8** If you wish to help or require further information about the Molesworth Environmental Education Centre, write to: Friends of Molesworth Environmental Education Centre, PO Box 394, New Norfolk, Tas 7140. Telephone Annie Beedroft (002) 62 2938 or Marge Lange (002) 61 2876.

**9** Copies of a protest letter against logging Claycoot Sound can be obtained from Kym Stevens, Greenpeace, telephone (02) 211 4066, or Karenne Jurd, the Wilderness Society, (02) 267 7929.

**10** For more information about Norwegian whaling, contact Greenpeace Australia—telephone 018 405 154

**11** For more information about the Everest Long March, write to: The Mount Everest Environment Conservation Foundation, PO Box 3508, Kathmandu, Nepal.

warmings of 0.5–2.5°C for inland Australia, 0–1.5°C for northern coastal areas, and 0.5–1.5°C for southern coastal areas by the year 2030.

Projected changes in summer rainfall for any location within the continent range from little change to as much as 20 per cent increase by 2030. Winter rainfall changes may be as much as ten per cent by 2030, but the direction of change depends on the region. Decreases are considered more likely for inland southern Australia whereas increases may occur further south.

An increase in rainfall intensity and the frequency of heavy rainfall events are also indicated and this may have serious implications for flood frequencies and soil erosion.

## Red Index

The Colong Foundation for Wilderness is compiling a National Red Index of wilderness areas. It is envisaged that the index will serve as a data base for government, conservation groups or interested individuals.

The 1986 unpublished report of the Australian Conservation Foundation, *Australian Wilderness—An Inventory*, will provide the base but the Colong Foundation wishes to draw from local knowledge to expand the known list of wilderness (or potential wilderness) areas in each State. See Action Box item 4.

## National Wilderness Conference

In a move to speed up protection of wilderness in Australia and regain the initiative from government, a Fourth National Wilderness Conference will be held at the Australian Museum in Sydney on 8–10 October 1993. Whereas wilderness Acts have been in place in the USA since the early 1960s, there is still no recognized national wilderness system in Australia. In Tasmania, wilderness is not even referred to in legislation.

See Action Box item 5.

## Threatened Species Programme

Half of Australia's marsupials are either extinct or threatened with extinction. Pet owners now have the opportunity to take action. During September and October 1993, each pet food label featuring the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF Australia, GPO Box 528, Sydney, NSW 2001) will be converted into a ten cent donation to help fund the Threatened Species Programme. In addition, each Pal Meaty-Bites and Whiskas Wiskettes barcode will generate a donation of 50 and 25 cents, respectively. WWF Australia hopes to raise \$250 000.

## NORTHERN TERRITORY

### Gouldian finch conservation

Construction has begun on the Mt Todd gold-mine, 45 kilometres north of Katherine. The mine threatens the largest known breeding colony, containing 42 per cent of known nests, of the endangered Gouldian finch.

Protection for the Gouldian finch has been made the responsibility of the Gouldian Finch National Recovery Team. The Commonwealth Government has promised \$100 000 to the recovery team. However, months into the

mine's construction, the team has not yet met. The most efficient recovery plan would be to ensure initially that the mine has minimal impact on this major breeding ground. Environmental groups fear that the \$100 000 will be spent on researching many aspects of finch biology but not the likely impact of mining. See Action Box item 6.

## Darwin mangrove destruction

Land-clearing has started on the proposed site of the Bayview Haven Canal Estate in Frances Bay. Bulldozers moved in recently to start work on the proposed 70 hectare development situated on sensitive mangrove stands and intertidal areas, just west of Darwin's central business district.

The development of high-density residential dwellings, commercial property and marina berths at Sadgroves Creek is the first part of the Darwin South Project, a project backed by the Northern Territory Government. It will systematically destroy a major part of the mangroves and estuaries in Darwin Harbour.

## QUEENSLAND

### Coral-spawning research

Earthwatch Australia is looking for volunteers with ten days to spare in October or November to join a team of coral specialists on Magnetic Island, off Townsville. The team is developing methods for the successful propagation of hard corals from eggs and sperm released during spawning. Coral releases its eggs and sperm in a mass event one night at full moon. The research team will collect eggs and sperm, study their embryonic development in a makeshift laboratory on the island and then transfer the successfully propagated coral back to the ocean. See Action Box item 7.

## NEW SOUTH WALES

### NPWS corruption allegations

Allegations of corruption in the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service made on the ABC's 'The 7.30 Report' will be referred to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. The item related to the illegal trade of Australian fauna and flora described in Raymond Hosier's book *Smuggled* (see Reviews in this issue). The NSW Environment Minister, Chris Hartcher, released a statement saying: 'I have no substantial evidence presented to me which would indicate that any of the allegations are correct, but I believe it is in the public interest to provide the opportunity for a full review when these allegations are made against a public authority.'

### New State parks

Two new National Parks and additions to another park are to be created. The new parks will be Popran National Park on the central coast and Cudmirrah National Park (otherwise known as Swan Lake) on the south coast. The Nature Reserve will be created at Ourimbah Creek (also on the central coast) and additions will be made to Nangar National Park in central western New South Wales.

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### National Parks seniors discount

Free entry to National Parks for pensioners in New South Wales has been replaced by a new scheme whereby all senior citizens are eligible for discounted entry. All Seniors Card holders entering parks by car receive a 47 per cent discount, with a 33 per cent discount for those travelling by bus.

### AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

#### Energy audit

According to a report in the June-July *Potaroo Review*, a 24-hour community energy audit in Canberra last September saw 20 000 households reduce their gas and electricity consumption by 12 per cent and 5 per cent, respectively. This amounted to a saving of 410 000 kilowatt hours, \$30 000, or 295 tonnes of carbon dioxide. For gas there was a saving of 71 594 cubic metres, or \$27 000.

### VICTORIA

#### New National Parks Service

A specialist National Parks Service will be created as part of reforms to the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources announced by the government in late April. Don Saunders has been appointed as director and he will have ultimate responsibility for the parks' budget. Also created is a specialist Forests Service along with divisions named Crown Land & Assets; Catchment & Land Management; and Flora, Fauna & Fisheries.

Other changes include the creation of five areas based on water catchments in place of the 16 regions and the abolition of the positions of regional manager and operations area supervisor. Each area has an area manager and a manager for each of the five services/divisions reporting to them.

The Victorian National Parks Association has supported the move for a National Parks Service and believes there should now be more accountability within the department. However, the VNPA regards the reporting relationships and precise role of staff as crucial. These vital ingredients will ultimately determine whether in fact we do have a genuine National Parks Service, whether the spirit of the government's changes are fully reflected in administrative arrangements and therefore whether the changes to the department are meaningful ones that VNPA can support.

interpretations within their relevant parts of the department.'

#### Airport planned for snow-fields

The *Age* newspaper reports that a consortium of Melbourne businessmen has been granted a Department of Aviation permit to build an airstrip, capable of taking jets, on a 265 hectare property at Horsehair Plain, about 15 minutes' drive east from the Mt Hotham and Dinner Plain snow-resorts and a short hop from Falls Creek.

The owner of the company Horsehair Ltd, Michael Cook, believes that the airport and an 18-hole golf-course and country club planned for Dinner Plain have the potential to treble the residential capacity of Mt Hotham and Dinner Plain to 10 000 beds and turn them into year-round resorts.

The plans and the sophisticated European-style mountain resort envisaged by building-tycoons Rino and Bruno Grollo at Mt Buller are indicative of what the Alpine Resorts Commission's chief executive officer, Phillip Bentley, describes as a 'very bullish' outlook for Victoria's snow-fields.



A baby Leadbeater's possum, orphaned by tree-felling. Right, brush-tailed phascogales are also known as tuans. Healesville Sanctuary collection

#### 'Oops' says CNR

A mapping error by the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources has resulted in the destruction of a prime habitat of one of Victoria's rarest mammals, the endangered Leadbeater's possum.

East of Powelltown, some five hectares of zone-one regrowth forest containing dead, hollow trees in which the possum nests were destroyed by loggers. Logging supervisors are supposed to be trained to recognize zone-one habitat, but this had apparently not happened.

#### Freeing phascogales

A new release method, developed as part of the Brush-tailed Phascogale Reintroduction Program, may help captive-bred animals to survive predators in the wild.

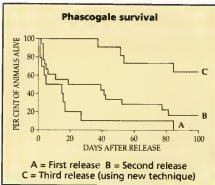
The programme, being undertaken jointly by Todd Soderquist—a PhD student studying phascogales, Healesville Sanctuary and Chicago Zoological Society, aims to re-establish phascogales in localities where they have become extinct.

The first release revealed that the captive-bred phascogales could catch their own food and find suitable nest sites. But predation by foxes and cats was severe, particularly during the first week of freedom.



A baiting and trapping programme eliminated foxes from the second release, and the animals were released earlier (immediately after weaning), simulating wild dispersal. Survival improved but a large number of phascogales were still killed by feral cats, goannas and birds of prey.

For the third release, Todd devised an entirely new method. Deep in the bush at the release site, he constructed large enclosures with side panels which carried a number of small holes. Their portals would allow



juvenile phascogales to scamper in and out but were too small to be used by a full-grown adult. The sanctuary's mother phascogales, with their litters, were transferred to these cages before the offspring were old enough to venture out of the nest. This eliminated the time spent in captivity before weaning, which dulled the phascogales' sense of caution.

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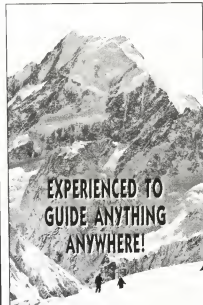
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Results exceeded all expectations. Even though cats and owls were present, the juvenile phascogales survived their early exploration of the forest and once weaned, dispersed naturally. It is hoped that the release programme may prove successful with other endangered species.

### TASMANIA

#### Mining resource security

In the wake of forest resource security, the Tasmanian Government has passed mining resource security legislation covering one quarter of the State. Many of the regions dealt with under the legislation are the remaining tracts of unprotected wilderness such as the rain forests of north-west Tasmania and areas adjoining the existing World Heritage National Parks such as Granite Tor and Reynolds Falls.

Bob Burton

#### Douglas-Apsley draft management plan released

The Tasmanian Minister for Parks & Wildlife, Mr Cleary, recently released a draft management plan for the Douglas-Apsley National Park which makes provision for mining and further mineral exploration in the area. The Shell Company currently has a mining retention licence over much of the northern part of the 16 000 hectare park which is underlain with black coal. Approaches by conservation groups for Shell to relinquish the licences have been rebuffed so far.

BB

#### Friends of Molesworth

At the end of last year the Tasmanian Government withdrew its staffing and funding of the Molesworth Environmental Education Centre. For 15 years the centre has provided learning experiences for primary-school and special-needs children within the southern region of Tasmania. It was also designed as a resource centre to support and encourage classroom teachers to use the environment as a stimulus and tool for learning.

At present the centre is operating on a 'user pays' basis and is limited to only three days a week. 'Friends of MEEC' is continuing a campaign to ensure that the centre survives and requires further voluntary support. See Action Box item 8.

### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

#### Uranium search

According to a report in the June-July issue of *Potoro Review*, in May the WA Government opened Rudall River National Park to exploration in the hope of beginning a uranium-mining industry.

#### Woodchip

As study by the Department of Conservation & Land Management in Western Australia has shown that Australia's share of Japan's hardwood chip imports fell from 66 per cent in 1983 to 30 per cent last year. The reason for the loss is increased competition from plantation chips in the international pulp market. (For further information on wood-chipping, see the Editorial in *Wild* no 49.)

## GREEN PAGES

### OVERSEAS

#### Canadian deforestation

Greenpeace Australia and the Wilderness Society have joined forces to protest against the logging of Clayoquot Sound, one of the world's largest remaining tracts of temperate rain forest. Seventy per cent of the forest on Vancouver Island has been logged.

The logging of Clayoquot Sound is in contravention of the rights of the indigenous Indians (First Nations) who make up the majority of the area's population. The Tla-O-Qui-Aht Nations are opposed to the current government logging plan. Australia imports some 20 per cent of its sawn timber from Canada. See Action Box item 9.

#### US 'rights to pollute'

According to a report in the April issue of *New Scientist*, the American Environmental Protection Agency has auctioned off rights to pollute the air. It sold 150 000 'allowances', permitting the release of 150 000 tonnes of sulphur dioxide. It raised \$21 million. Power companies were given a licence to emit half the amount which they were emitting in 1980. They could either buy more allowances or clean up their act. The cost of polluting the air was on average \$300 a tonne of sulphur dioxide. The cost of installing pollution-control equipment could cost \$500 a tonne. One power company bought \$11.5 million of allowances.

#### Norwegian whaling

Greenpeace has called on Australian supermarket chains to stop stocking Norwegian fish products following news that 28 Norwegian whaling vessels, with government-sanctioned quotas of seven whales, have left port for commercial whaling purposes.

Australia currently imports about 900 tonnes of Norwegian fish products, worth more than \$A6.2 million. Several importers of Norwegian products to the UK and Germany have already cancelled or refused to renew contracts for fish, cheese and alcohol. Early reports from Greenpeace indicate that the bans on Norwegian products have already cost Norway more than the value of whales killed. See Action Box item 10.

#### Everest clean-up

The Mt Everest Environmental Conservation Foundation (EECF) is a non-government organization recently established to limit and recover garbage left on Mt Everest and other Himalayan peaks by mountaineers and trekkers. Non-Nepalese membership is \$US100.

Next spring, 1994, the EECF has planned an Everest Long March to clean up the world's highest peak. 'In this campaign all countries of the world can participate willingly.'

Further details from the convener, Laghu Dhan Rai, will be published as they come to hand. Who could resist their first press release? 'We request to you particularly to convey the aforesaid facts (Everest Long March 1994) to the journalists of your country to publish forth, if possible.'

See Action Box item 11. ■

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.



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# UPHILL SKIING

Andrew Barnes tells how to go up in the world without back-sliding

**F**ree-heel skiers are often victims of Australia's mixed terrain. Long plateaux are bordered by abrupt drops into treed gullies; strange convolutions of smooth-topped ridges converge with steep spurs. The 'touring' skier must cope not only with changeable snow but also with long, undulating plains mixed with some steep turns and difficult traverses.

As a result of these peculiarly Australian conditions, the preferred skis over the past ten years have been pattern-based with a metal edge. Unfortunately, many believe that you cannot 'tour' on waxed, single-cambered skis. This myth has developed to the detriment of free-healers seeking the best performance from their skis while going downhill. Why? Because pattern-based skis do not turn as well as smooth-based skis.

For those intent on skiing at our best destinations, the single-cambered waxed ski should be the ski of choice. Mt Feathertop, Mt Twynam, Leather Barrel Creek—these areas demand a certain amount of touring for access. Here are a few techniques, developed by skiers desperate to gain quality turns, for moving uphill on slippery sticks.

Let's start with one of the least obvious methods for moving about. Imagine: no grip at all!

It's spring. You have walked to the summit of Mt Bogong by the almost snowless Eskdale Spur. Snow still covers most of your route between the summit cairn and West Peak. The terrain is predominantly flat or rolling. Extend your poles as far as possible and skate. Unskatable uphill can be herring-boned. Downhills and flats are double-poled. With reasonable fitness and technique, you will arrive more quickly than those on grip skis due to your superior glide on downhill and flat sections. As you will be plugging steps out of gullies for the rest of the day, all the grip you need is on your boot soles. Some canny pinheads allow their bases to become 'dry' underfoot—still glider-waxing tip and tail—so that they obtain a little grip and can stride up gentle inclines. Of course, this method requires careful assessment of the terrain to be negotiated.

This next technique is useful when touring for a longer time, or over steeper grades to reach a favourite slope. At this stage, you must confront the 'You can't wax single-cambered skis for grip' myth. I have completed many multiday tours on waxed, single-cambered skis. On one trip, through the Tetons in the USA, we made less than 40 turns in the first three days. Otherwise, we toured along flat canyons or slogged uphill, using wax for propulsion.

A correctly waxed ski will grip and glide even when the wax is in constant contact with snow. 'Aaach, it requires the waxing skills of Gunde Svaan', I hear you mutter. No, a



Gary Schmitt climbing in deep snow on the West Ridge of Mt Magdala, Victorian Alps. Michael Hampton

three-wax system is all you need: two stick waxes for dry(er) snow and a universal Klister.

Typically, you would carry a three-wax system when travelling to Mt Townsend from Thredbo in September. Normally, the universal Klister will suffice. Use minimal amounts for icy conditions; slap it on when the snow is wet and mushy. The Red Stick is in case of a late snowfall, usually wet at that time

of year. The Violet Plus Stick (Swix waxes or equivalent) is tucked in for that lucky late fall of dry snow. Mix the two for different conditions and spread thickly or thinly as appropriate. It doesn't take a genius to use three waxes and travel efficiently. If three sounds intimidating, start with a two-wax system. These are sold as a package: one wax for dry snow, one wax for wet snow.

Wax will 'strip off' your single-cambered skis relatively quickly. However, judicious application can be a bonus; you arrive at your destination with little grip left and ready for

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turns. A 'clinging smidgen' may be helpful if you intend to traverse out of a gully or herring-bone short pitches. Grip waxes adhere longer if you avoid glider-waxing the middle of your skis. Unwanted wax can be removed with Shellite and toilet-paper before attacking precipitous slopes.

'Skins' are the best way to tackle long, uphill stretches where grip is far more important than glide. Climbing out of the main Watsons Crags gully springs to mind. Skins can also make long, icy, up-and-down ridges safer when wearing a heavy pack—sacrificing glide and turns for low speed and fewer falls.

Most skiers use skins which 'stick' to bases with a magic glue. The glue does not adhere to the ski base when the skins are pulled off. The furry material which grips the snow is the skin of bush rats that have annoyed one too many hut-bound ski tourists. (Just kidding!) In fact, various synthetic materials have replaced the original skin of furry critters. I'd recommend the cheapest you can find since they're all ridiculously expensive.

Also available are 'snake skins'. These use a serrated plastic base for grip and are attached by straps. They are heavier, more expensive compared to traditional skins, and straps impede edging. However, they are easy to attach and detach, operate well in our often wet conditions and do not require regluing. Which suit Australian conditions best? I don't know. Glued skins would be safer for those planning overseas trips to places where there may be long traverses. Skins should be as wide as possible without covering the metal edges.

All skins are supplied with an attachment to hold them in place on the ski tip. However, when it comes to attaching skins at the tail of your skis, there are as many options as bush rats in huts. I cut mine ten centimetres short of the tail. Skiing pressure keeps them on and I have not reglued them in five seasons of use. As a bonus, I have a pair of 'mini-skins', the left-over pieces from the full-length version. These I slap on underfoot for short uphill when I'm too lazy to wax or skate but to use a full skin seems an overkill.

I've heard people say that the tail of their skin comes off, flaps about and eventually peels off altogether. To remedy this, sew a piece of climbing tape to the end of the skin and tension it over the tail of the ski, then attach it to the deck by a D-ring hooked over a screw sticking out of the ski.

Contrary to popular belief, skins can be applied over grip wax. Often I will grip-wax my skis on the 'approach' and then put skins over the waxed skis for the final climb. Besides, in the midst of a howling blizzard, faced with a long uphill climb, who is going to try and remove Klister? In fact, I am convinced that it is the wax, combined with magic glue, which has saved me from ever having to reglue my skins!

Finally, let's talk about the nuances of quality steps, as a friend once said. Walking is a most valuable uphill technique and can range from wandering up exposed ground in spring to kicking gnarly steps up a 50 degree ('hey, it's a short cut!') gully while aspiring mountaineers practise ice-axe self-arrests around you.

Walking will often be quicker than skinning or waxing when there is patchy or very firm

## WILD IDEAS

snow on a gentle uphill; especially if the rest of the tour will be flat or downhill. By the time you wax or skin up, you could have been half-way to an untracked gully. On the other hand, 'post-holing' through deep snow on shallow grades is the least efficient method of progress.

In gullies that are too narrow to traverse effectively or too steep to grip using skins,



Michael Hampton fails to see the wood for the trees on the Razorback, Victorian Alps. Andrew Barnes

step-kicking is the only alternative. In fact, I often assess whether I'm really fearful of skiing a gully by judging whether I would be even more scared kicking steps back up!

Those who use 'turning' skis will find themselves kicking plenty of steps. Also, professional step-kickers are much more pleasant to follow than amateurs. Find the best snow in the gully—firm but not too firm, soft but not too soft. Avoid the deeper and gloppier middle and head for the sides, one of which will be slightly shaded in spring. Besides, other skiers do not want to execute face-first swan-dives as their tips are swallowed by your foot holes.

Steps should be comfortably spaced for the simplest person in the group. Give each other plenty of room in case of a slip. When the going gets hairy—uncomfortably steep or firm—the tails of your skis make useful ice-axes. Otherwise, stick skis through the side-straps of your pack, high enough to avoid hitting the slope or entangling your feet.

This article is not designed to turn all and sundry against pattern-based skis. If your main aim in skiing is to put down the best turns possible, then waxing skis are your tools of trade. These techniques will help you to use them effectively. ■

Andrew Barnes (see Contributors in Wild no 13) is a freelance photographer and a Nordic skiing instructor and addict. When not on the snow, he paddles white-water rivers.



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*Below above, Mt. Everest, 1990.*



*Above left, Brigitte Muir on the summit of Aconcagua. Brigitte Muir collection.*



*Above middle, Robinson Valley, Nepal, and Griffith. Above right, Brigitte Muir at Aconcagua. Brigitte Muir collection.*

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# THE LONG VIEW

What motivates walkers to undertake extended trips?  
Warren Bonython offers some suggestions

What is the motivation for undertaking a long bushwalk? Reasons that come to mind are the sheer enjoyment of walking, the appeal of wild places, scientific curiosity in traversing particular terrains, the challenge of inherent difficulties—and many more. There is also satisfaction in conceiving and then planning a difficult journey, followed by the enjoyment of carrying out the plan and achieving the desired result.

Motivation can arise from an atmosphere of romance: the reaction to the title of a book like Martin Conway's *The Alps from End to End* can be to 'turn on' your mind, as it did mine when I decided, in a flash of inspiration, to walk the whole length of the Flinders Ranges. (Subsequently I wanted to call the book I wrote about it *The Flinders from End to End*, or perhaps *Flinders Ranges Odyssey*—but my publisher had more pedestrian ideas; it had to be *Walking the Flinders Ranges*.)

The painting of Mt Patawerta by Hans Heysen, which has the romantic title 'Land of the Oratunga', exerted a magical attraction that drew me on my first visit to the Flinders Ranges in 1945.

A little introspection shows that a principal motivation of mine is not without self-interest. I have wanted to be the first to perform a feat—the first to cross the Gammon Ranges; the first to walk the length of the Flinders Ranges; the first to set foot on the dry centre of Lake Eyre; the first to make an unassisted foot crossing of the Simpson Desert, and so on. This indicates a competitive attitude, and I am obliged to admit that I harbour such feelings.

However, this is no more egotistical than wanting to win a race, or even to top an examination, and further reflection suggests that this sort of motivation can actually be justified because it is an important stimulus to achievement; without it many exploits would never have been attempted.

The Gammon Ranges are the wildest, most rugged part of the Flinders Ranges. In 1946 they were little known, difficult of access, mysterious, and allegedly never entered by non-Aborigines. My curious eye was caught by the caption of

a newspaper photograph: 'No white man has ever succeeded in penetrating this rugged area of the Gammon Ranges...'

Here I had geographical curiosity, the challenge of difficulty, and romance, so my motivation was threefold. I failed in my first attempt at a crossing of the ranges when one of my party fell and broke his leg—in the heart of this unknown region. It had to wait until the following year.

Gaining familiarity with the Flinders Ranges over the next ten years or so, I developed my motive for embarking upon the overall 1000 kilometre walk along them, begun in 1967 and pursued in stages over 18 months. There were numerous challenges to meet and problems to overcome.

My one-day walk in 1970 to the centre of Lake Eyre was an attempt initiated by my conclusion that this spot was only 20 kilometres beyond the tip of a certain peninsula jutting into the lake, and therefore quite accessible from there. The challenges were navigation across a featureless surface and the soft, muddy lake bed itself. (The latter was a more formidable obstacle than I realized at the time; it later transpired that I had stumbled through a gap in the not as yet identified 'Slush Zone'—an area of semi-fluid lake sediments 'which would not support the weight of man, beast or vehicle'.)

After plodding over what might have been the surface of the moon, with a featureless horizon in all directions, I finally reached the flat, nondescript centre, and then returned.

The Simpson Desert has always seemed to me a romantic enough place—the more so because of the explorations of Cecil Madigan, my old geology teacher. However, the main motivation for my walk across it in 1973 (in the company of Charles McCubbin) was the reaction to my own first conclusion that it could not be done.

In 1967 Charles had suggested that it could be walked 'if all the water and food you would need could be pulled along with you in something on wheels', but I then made enquiries and reported back that the idea would not work. (See my



Warren Bonython walking the Simpson Desert.  
Jac Schmiechen

book *Walking the Simpson Desert*.) Then I brooded over the problem for years until it became a challenge.

In due course I came up with a plan which included the desert cart, 'Comalco Camel', and we ultimately pulled it in tandem across the desert. We had the satisfaction of following the detailed plan, and on the way we had to face the challenge of many troubles and problems.

I would often ponder over what my next long walk might be, canvassing various possibilities in my mind. When in early 1976 a message from my erstwhile companion on the concluding stage of the Flinders Ranges walk, Gil Hitchens, reached me from London saying 'I have some leave coming to me. Where can we walk?', my latent thinking



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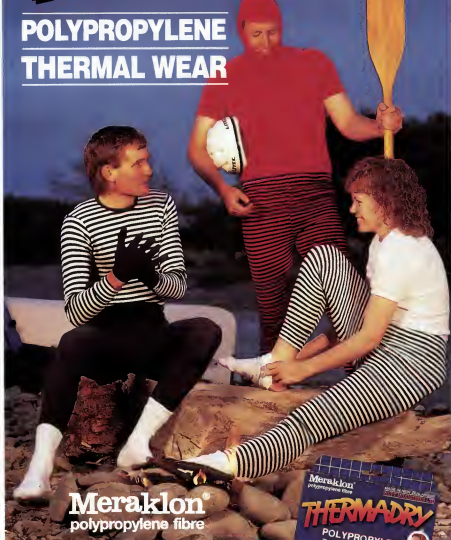
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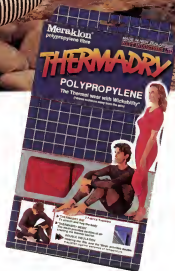
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## WILD REFLECTIONS

instantly crystallized, and without hesitation I answered '...the Macdonnell Ranges!' This led that same year to my walking the length of the Macdonnells (though unfortunately in the end Gil had to forgo taking part), with all the satisfaction of planning and of executing the plan I had drawn up soon after the initial decision to go.

Familiarity with non-walking aspects of a place can later develop a desire to walk through it. For 30 years I had been engaged in a long-running geographical and scientific investigation of Lake Eyre which, however, had involved only some limited walking round and in from the lake margin—except for that walk to the centre. During this time I was undertaking long walks elsewhere, mentally placing them in a separate compartment from the Lake Eyre study. But it was inevitable that Lake Eyre and a long bushwalk would come together, and they did.

By 1979 Lake Eyre had nearly dried up after the 1974 filling—the greatest for centuries. While my study of that event was winding down, my thoughts strayed to walking along the dry margin.

In 1980 I tried out a system of relaying heavy loads and establishing a succession of caches along the south-eastern shores as a means of provisioning a projected long walk in this waterless area in a manner that would not require the intrusion of the environmentally unfriendly motor vehicle into a *de facto* wilderness. Then deciding that this method was too demanding and uninteresting, I turned in 1981 to testing different human-hauled carts.

With the cart finally adopted I was able to carry seven days' supply of food and water, so for a proposed 33-day walk round the perimeter of Lake Eyre I would need to place at least three supply dumps at seven-day intervals. I had abandoned the backpacking relay method, but I realized I could still avoid appreciable violation of wilderness by hiring a helicopter to do the cache-laying job. In 1982 Terry Krieg and I were able to complete a 530 kilometre circumambulation of Lake Eyre.

A final reason for undertaking a walk is to celebrate something. In 1990 I did a 900 kilometre 'Eyre's Horseshoe Lake Walk' to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Edward Eyre's exploration, and in 1991 I made an attempt on Mt Kilimanjaro (5895 metres), in Tanzania, to celebrate my 75th birthday (unfortunately, like those of many other aspirants, my climb was aborted at 5100 metres due to high-altitude sickness). ■

Warren Borython is renowned for his long-distance treks, most notably his walk across the Simpson Desert in 1973, and for his contribution to the arts.

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# THE PROM

A special *Wild* feature on this most enduring of popular bushwalking destinations, Victoria's Wilsons Promontory



## THE ENDURING PROMONTORY

*John Béchervaise reflects on an almost 70-year association with mainland Australia's most southerly extension*

For three years short of 70 I have known and loved Wilsons Promontory. With the passage of time, there has grown unqualified appreciation by increasing numbers of visitors. I am asked to tell of older times when fellow travellers were rare, the means of access more challenging, and equipment more basic, but time and events were, as ever, relative and extensible.

It was customary, where I once taught, for staff to name their rooms after desirable places. There were, I recall, a 'Kings Cross', a 'South Pole', an 'Everest', a 'Top Hole', 'Ayres Rock' and some more erudite names. Soon after taking up residence in the Middle School, I called my study 'The Prom'. There were frequent enquiries as to the name's provenance. Some suggested that it commemorated the famous promenade concerts in the Albert Hall but, for me, it named one of the great places on earth: the most southerly extension of mainland Australia. Over the years I transferred the title several times; for a while, to my lonely hut in



Wilsons Promontory: wild loneliness and ecological importance. Janusz Molinski. **Right**, room with a view: Rodondo Island, Wilsons Promontory. John Béchervaise



Antarctica, beyond the pack-ice pale. All my travels have been more buoyant with hope that I may return to certain boyhood haunts, none better known or more loved than Wilsons Promontory.

Memory preserves the Prom's remoteness, which in the 1920s still lay for the most part as undisturbed as for the many journeys of Ferdinand von Mueller who, 50 and more years before, had emphasized its wild loneliness, its ecological importance, its beauty and difficulty of access. Ironically, at the same time, the magnificent forests of Sealers Cove were

for bed, soft earth for a hip-hole, and fuel for the fire. We wore workmen's or army boots with a scatter of hobnails. To ease their fit we stretched them over thick socks, and squelched in the Scotsmans Creek for half an hour while the leather shaped itself; then we walked away from water for two or three hours until the boots were dry. Finally we Dubbined them.

As frontpacks we carried strapped blanket rolls and a groundsheet which could be worn as a cape, a small japara tent (with mantua-makers' seams, sewn on the machine at home), a sun-hat and a billy-bag. We packed a lot of flour, tea and sugar, dried apples and apricots, powdered milk, pork German sausages, pea-soup and what else we fancied and could carry in our frameless rucksacks. Later, of course, we graduated to cane-frames. Always we carried fishing-tackle. Our first aid was mainly sticking-plaster...on the whole our loads were heavier, our rests more rewarding.

Of course, we eagerly reached for any improvements in gear and method, but news of these was eclectic and novel when there was no company on the two-way hike between Fish Creek and the distant Promontory lighthouse (or, elsewhere, even for a winter traverse, end to end, of Mt Buller). Credit for information and improvements of clothing, shelter and sustenance was due to a few tentative walking clubs, the returning veterans of Mawson's polar expeditions (notably Archie Hoadley), the Boy Scout movement, the growing interest of the schools, and the logistics of the First World War. None dreamed of today's glossy literature.

The second half of the nineteenth century had seen the near completion of the railway network over south-eastern Victoria. Beyond the railheads still lingered the 'horse and buggy' days. When David and I set out from Mt Eliza in the summer holidays of 1926-27 we earnestly consulted the available maps, including the initial compilations of the Victorian Tourist Bureau. Then we took the train, when steam and inclination concurred, for Korumburra whence began our long hike to the most southerly lighthouse on the mainland. Our walk through Leongatha and Meeniyan to Fish Creek, about 50 miles all told, gave us confidence that our 'shakedown's' were adequate.

There was sufficient in our *terra incognita* for interest in every mile of the way to our successive bridgeheads on Shallow Inlet and beyond, the Darby and Tidal Rivers. That we should aim for the farthest south was natural enough, but the unexpected outcome of that boyhood trek held an enduring destination clear and crisp even after 70 years. I have sometimes wondered why we selected Korumburra as a starting point for our walk. I may have heard that the redoubtable Ros Garnet, riding his bike two years earlier, had made the same departure.

After a few successive visits the Promontory may seem small enough to be comprehensible, yet always, in the event, there are new and surprising aspects. A score of times in youthful company I took those southern roads in eager anticipation of familiar rewards, the magical granite hills blue in the distance, slowly marshalling themselves



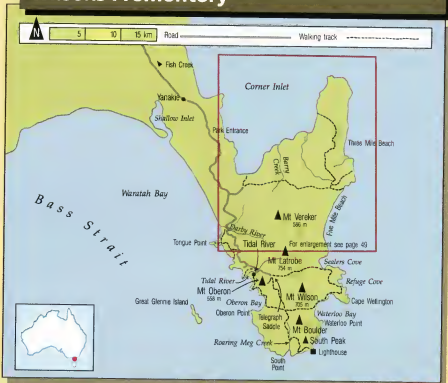
Sealers Cove, from the Refuge Cove track. Nothing remains of the mid-nineteenth century sealing, timber and grazing activity. *Béchervaise. Opposite*, the Promontory granite makes monumental towers. *Paul Sinclair*

being destroyed. In 1885 the contributions of Messrs Lucas, Gregory and Robinson to *The Victorian Naturalist* were part of the first flush of the burgeoning interest in the Promontory's enduring appeal.

Then, as now, any venture beyond the ends of roads was the better for careful planning. It was part of the enjoyment of the trip. The means of fulfilment varied; the purposes were constant. Still, in fact, shelter was more important than food. There was implicit satisfaction in a well-planned hike; the joy was integral, the means inseparable from the purpose.

Seventy years ago, Victorian country roads harassed the feet; maps beyond the newer settlements were exiguous; tracks were still being blazed to mark essential routes. It was not part of the game 'to rough it' but maybe we lived closer to nature, and there was greater appreciation of fine weather, good brushwood

## Wilsons Promontory





in the order of my recall, pointing the separate whale-back islands of Bass Strait.

David and I found the southern route, to Shallow Inlet from Fish Creek, four hours' hard walking, though the delectable mountains ahead strengthened our resolve to push on from the inlet, at the narrow isthmus connecting Corner Inlet with Warratah Bay where the sea is always close and generally audible. At the inlet we had noisy and intimidating company from three tall Irish wolf-hounds. They kept us emballed until we were released by command of their masters. These were the amiable, accommodating and picturesque Winchester brothers, fishermen and collectors of the exquisite paper nautilus shells washed up in the calm shoal waters. Purveyed when chance sent the occasional custom, the fragile shells fetched good prices, but anywhere south of Fish Creek in those days, the visitor received more than she or he gave, and often the shells became keepsakes of a convivial and long-remembered night. We were regaled by the old fishermen with damper, mutton and tales of the inlet, especially of the giant shark said to round the shallows regularly at high tide. We camped at Winchester's, too tired to worry about Johnny Nabtoes...or over-active canine fleas.

At the turn of the tide next day stakes were pointed out marking the safe way through the low water to the long western beach leading down to the

mouth of the Darby River. On the isthmus, comprising the dunes and sand heathlands of Yanakie, grew magnificent banksias rising above coastal tea-tree and wattles, boobialla and sweet bursaria. Though the area was extensively grazed, pink caladenias and many other wild flowers were common. The narrow stony and sandy road to the Darby 'chalet', kept by the ranger and his wife with accommodation for about a dozen guests, was at the end of the road; it was seldom fully booked. The most vivid imagination could never have envisaged today's Tidal River camping ground.

Time and tides permitting, a car could reach as far as the Darby by the only road, the primary purpose of which was to keep a service route open for the telegraph-line which continued south for about 18 miles (28 kilometres) by exiguous tracks and clearings to the lighthouse settlement.

The Darby River, 25 miles (40 kilometres) from Fish Creek, always seemed a boundary of Arcadia. By beach or narrow track the walk was arduous though, either way, there was recurrent interest. In 1926, near the Darby dunes, there were still, half submerged, the iron plates laid to prevent bogging in the deep sand; the beach route depended on the tides. Through the years, after a long trudge, the company always relished a dip in the dark, clear waters of the Darby.

At the river, the general nature of the Prom—high granite headlands separating small coves or expansive beaches—

became apparent. The solitary ranger at the time (Butler, if I remember rightly) exercised some authority over visitors and campers, but this was an easy yoke. He also provided mounts and escorts for occasional riders. While the fish were biting off Tongue Point my A-model Ford once narrowly escaped immersion in the rising tide. Five Geelong Collegians saved the day.

The clear-cut granite mountains could each tell memorable tales. The main spine of peaks, none more than 2500 feet (762 metres) high, is undulating. Clear, peaty streams reach the sea, but are slowed in swamps and occasional quicksands. Could there be a better stage for adventure? It was felt there by such nobles as George Bass and Matthew Flinders (who recommended its name). We could share their intrinsic visions.

The Promontory granites made monumental towers on the flanks and summits of every hill we climbed, yet from Mt Bishop to South Peak the groups of tors were distinctive. In those days, everyone who found the Prom was a first-time adventurer. One crossed ridges after a breathless ascent at a distinctive saddle and gazed down on unvisited wilderness. The Telegraph Saddle is now the end point of tourists' car travel. In the early days it was an appreciable climb from youthful campsites at the Darby or Tidal Rivers to the summit of Oberon. A couple of miles to the east, the Windy Saddle between Mt Ramsay and Mt Wilson headed the way down to



sheltered Sealers Cove where George Bass anchored in 1798.

When first I waded the Sealers Creek at the submerged bridge, there still survived the main structure of a jetty built by the timber men who decimated the forests of mountain ash, messmate and the fine stands of blackwood and myrtle beech. Virtually nothing else remained of the sealing, timber and grazing activity which flourished in the mid-nineteenth century. The history of Wilsons Promontory provided yet another facet of interest. A contemporary

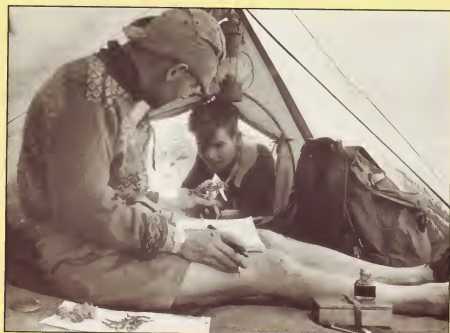
light, past the eroded skull rocks to the trim, white granite housing of the keepers, none of whom we had met. We were a disreputable pair of teenagers but the head keeper, Hughie Dickson, a North Sea fisherman, gave us a warm welcome, a feast of home-made scones, a bath and a rather odd but effective change of clothes while our own were washed and dried. We were, Hughie said, his 'first footers'. That we had retrieved the pack in the bog gave Hughie intermittent mirth. Apparently, there had been an arranged visit from

rove the lonely Kent group. The wreck of the *Karatane* lay grounded on Erith; we built a raft of driftwood and spent a night aboard, hearing the tide mounting the iron ladders. Through Captain J K Davis, Director of Navigation, the Promontory dinghy was eventually used for our landing on Rodondo.

To write of the past is to write of the present. So little of the Prom has completely changed though the emergency road now leaves Norgate, Roaring Meg and Martins Hill behind. I think the wild goats no longer leap on Norgate. Lorna Fearn and I once scrambled down from Norgate to the mouth of Roaring Meg when we were due to take pot luck with Hughie. I misjudged the time; the darkness was intense on a moonless night and we could find our way only by feeling with our feet the deep water-worn track to South Peak; then by the light racing over the waves far below. There is no need to be quantitative on the Prom. To store in a lifetime ten peaks: South Peak, Boulder, Norgate and Wilson, Oberon and Ramsay, Bishop and Latrobe, Leonard and Vereker, or an equal number of sequestered coves and beaches could hold rewards unexceeded by their kind.

Lorna and I once took the Vereker Range, south-east from Corner Inlet, and reckoned our distance made seven miles (11 kilometres) in three days, clearing a tunnel through the scrub. We got water by squeezing moss. Then there came torrential rain and we were fireless for two hours. Eventually, having reached our summit (Mt Latrobe), we followed down Lilly Pilly Gully to Mrs Butler's chalet where, in warm baths, we removed scores of blood-sated leeches. The trip made enduring memories still sometimes aired at the kitchen table. The last time I climbed Latrobe, not after fire regrowth, allowed a return with daylight from base to summit.

How much we could record in 40 years of the after days. Hughie's wife, a girl saved from the *Titanic*, died too far from help at the Cape Nelson light. All the early keepers of the white light towers took their lives in their hands. The telegraph could report a sudden emergency, but essential help might be many hours' effort away...Perhaps the automation which now serves most lights including that of the Prom could be turned to campers and bushwalkers or to youth hostels for walkers who made the grade; who walked from the modern world to the overlook of our early navigators: Cook, Flinders and Bass...or of the scarcely less intrepid light-keepers who followed them. ■



John Béchervaise records the flora (assisted by Fred Elliott) on Rodondo Island. 'In those days, everyone who found the Prom was a first-time adventurer.' Béchervaise

Prom traveller and scientist, Ros Garnet, also a well-known naturalist, has taken a leading part in description and research of the area.

On our first trip south, unexpectedly, between Oberon and Waterloo Bays, the corduroy of logs, half afloat and masking the broad swamp of the telegraph route at its most glutinous stretch, had disappeared, and we found ourselves floundering through deep, boggy mud. As for Macbeth, 'returning were as tedious as go o'er'. We continued our messy progress and suddenly came on a rucksack, mostly containing food, half submerged in the swamp. It was unexpected bounty; in vain we looked round for hungry owners.

A bonus of loneliness and distant times awaited us down below; none ever forgets that first view of the lighthouse. Even in this age of automation it stands pristine and sentinel on the south-east point, with its isles: the Hogans, Curtis and Rodondo and distant Deal—said to be the highest lighthouse in the world—within range of its warning beams.

In the exuberant days David and I bounded down the steep track to the

three reporters who had failed to negotiate the swamp, and returned to Sealers Cove and their boatman without visiting the light.

Not only was the lighthouse a place of traditional hospitality, but its whole disciplined life-style intrigued. By Morse lamp all passing shipping was signalled; its movements and arrival times in Melbourne forecast; all information conveyed by telegraph. From the polished look-out with its flags and powerful brass telescope we spied not only the shipping but the northern islands of Bass Strait, some with basking seals. Steep-sided Rodondo, although only seven or eight miles offshore said to be virginal, issued a challenge to be met in the fullness of time.

Hughie Dickson was a superb boatman. In all weathers, weekly, he sculled out to the *Tambar* for mail and fresh food, his lantern disappearing for long intervals in the black troughs of the sea. While Dickson and his versatile company tended the brilliant prisms of the light, we returned whenever possible to the Prom, and made the long walk from Fish Creek or Foster. It was Hughie who arranged for our berths on the lighthouse supply ship, *Cape York* (six shillings a day—all found), so we could visit Cliff Island and, when he was keeper there, to

John Béchervaise was for many years a teacher—in the UK, at Geelong College, and later at Geelong Grammar School—and led students from both Geelong schools on adventurous journeys to many parts of Australia. He led exploratory expeditions in Antarctica during the 1950s, and has travelled, climbed and explored widely. He is a writer and poet with many published works and was for a time co-editor of *Walkabout* magazine. He is now retired and lives with his wife Lorna in Geelong.



# NORTHERN EXPOSURE

As Michelle Fincke and Byron Smith discovered, Wilsons Promontory's lesser-known north end offers the most secrets

**W**e were stumbling slowly through a wide, waist-deep swamp, our lower legs sticking in the soft mud and our thighs stinging from leeches and from cuts made by sharp, persistent heath and scrub.

It had been five hours since we'd set off into this jungle on the seventh day of our hike. Our map was inaccurate and we appeared to have made little progress through the head-high vegetation. Tired and demoralized, thoughts turned to our 'serious' bushwalking buddies who'd said that this was for wimps. 'Wilsons Promontory?' they'd sniggered. 'I'd sooner hike the Princes Highway!'

This wasn't a highway; in fact there was little sign of a track. We were somewhere between Tin Mine Cove and Barry Creek, at the northern end of the Prom, headed (we hoped) to where it all began a week ago.

Our week-long Wilsons Promontory sojourn started at the ranger's office, at the entrance to the park, where fees are paid and extra track notes and maps obtained. This is also the best place to get local weather, track and water information...well, usually: 'There was water a month ago when I was out there', the ranger said confidently. 'Should be okay.' So, with permit in hand, we drove to the Millers Landing car-park and started the long haul.

Our first objective was a short hike (an easy seven kilometres) to the Barry Creek campsite. Here the track is like a highway, cutting a deep, winding scar into the bush. The sun was hot and the sky cloudless. When the weather's like that, beating up off the gravel road, it feels like the outback.

The track winds past dry-humoured banksia cones, inquisitive kangaroos, snakes, lizards, fields of heath and primitive cemeteries of erect, tombstone-like blackboys; all the more reminiscent of inland territories. But this imagery is contradicted by the proximity of the turquoise sea.

The track offers wonderful views, to the north and west, across Corner Inlet and the Yanakie isthmus. Mangroves hug the shoreline; they are the most southerly in the world. The view to the east, in contrast, presents the steeply rising Vereker Range, which dominates the northern region of the park.

The Barry Creek site is sheltered, secluded and within hearing is the babbling freshwater creek which gives this stop its name. There is a wide array of wildlife around the campsite,



The track to lower Barry Creek—not quite the Princes Highway. Byron Smith

including bands of beautiful gang-gangs, wattlebirds, rosellas, wallabies and the ever-present reptiles, many of the fanged variety. We set up camp, explored a little (the signposted detour to the summit of Mt Vereker offers spectacular views), cooked dinner and retired early, looking forward to the next leg of the journey, to Five Mile Beach.

We awoke to busy and beautiful bird-song, had a quick breakfast and started out early on the mild, eight kilometre walk to the wide, white sands

of Five Mile Beach. Once at the coast, a short walk along the shore brought us to our campsite on the banks of Miranda Creek. It was a pleasant, sheltered setting and we were alone.

We spent the afternoon exploring lichen-covered rocks around the point and swimming with fish, near scampering crabs, in the tea-brown, brackish creek. Close to the sand and on the creek banks there's a vast variety of coastal vegetation, especially succulents. The north side of the creek rises steeply into dense scrub, tea-tree and eucalypts.

The next morning steady rain started before dawn, so we decided to spoil

ourselves with breakfast in bed, hoping the rain would stop before we'd set out to Johnny Souey Cove. A let-up at about 9 am saw us on our way, retracing our steps back along the beach (where dark clouds loomed and soon dumped their contents) to St Kilda Junction and then north for half a kilometre, along the Mt Margaret Track, to the Johnny Souey turn-off. It was nearly five kilometres from here to the beach and the final steep descent offered magnificent views to the south and east, across Five Mile Beach to the Prom's highest point, Mt Latrobe.

Once at the idyllic Johnny Souey Cove, we chose a site overlooking the ocean and, with the weather now clearing, decided to stay in our own blue lagoon Eden for the next two days. The following leg was to be a 21 kilometre haul to Tin Mine Cove, involving a frustrating double-back almost to St Kilda Junction. With that on the horizon we were happy to ignore it for now and establish a comfortable camp in paradise.

This was a good decision as there's a lot to explore, both inland and around the shore and the rock pools. Soldier crabs in their thousands live right along the shore and the sound of them crackling tightly into their tiny mud-hut homes in the shallows soon became familiar. Beautiful shells, including a plethora of multi-coloured cones and cowries, abalone,

oysters, scallops and other aquatic delicacies abounded.

On the first day we explored rock pools. We each carried a mask and snorkel for the journey, which may seem an extravagance, but with these we were able to unveil a whole other world—one occupied by anemones, crabs, colourful sea vegetables and a variety of fish, including luderick, parrot fish, tiny sweep and toadies.

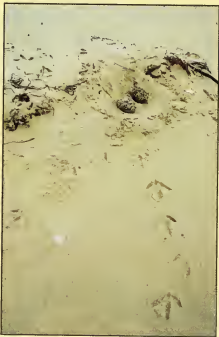
Without wet suits the water was cold, so we spent a lot of time kneeling by rock pools with our heads under water as if playing a manic game of apple-bob. Our weird efforts were rewarded by glimpses of the local wildlife which dwell beneath the surface of this beautiful water.

Giant albatross occasionally soared overhead, boasting silently of their impressive wing-spans and graceful, flying ease.

Later that day we explored the rocks around the coast at the northern end of the cove. We had been traversing the rocks for about an hour when it dawned on us that this might be a happy, though challenging, alternative route to Tin Mine Cove. It would avoid the frustrating double-back and offer some true, low-impact exploration. The idea was exciting and we resolved to give it a go.

As we cooked dinner the sun was lowering in the sky and swamp wallabies

appeared on the beach, up near the scrub, a hundred metres or so from where we were camped. A mother and her tiny hopping joey were engrossed in what appeared to be a piece of bark. The mother wallaby was clutching the large, dark object and ripping it with her teeth when another wallaby emerged from the bush and, with some aggression, frightened the mother and her joey into the bush.



Tern eggs on Three Mile Beach. Opposite, shell-scape at Five Mile Beach. Smith

## The north end of Wilsons Promontory

While the well-trodden tracks to the south of Tidal River are spectacular, it is the little-used northern tracks, which hold most secrets. The north remains a surprisingly untouched wilderness and it harbours an impressive range of wildlife: swamp wallabies; tiger snakes; emus; koalas; yellow-tailed cockatoos; battalions of water-bound soldier crabs; black swans and sea eagles. In addition, many of the 700 species of native plants on Wilsons Promontory are found in the north, including: wild orchids of pink, purple, white and yellow; banksia; spinifex; tea-tree; heath; fern; hakea and lilly-pilly.

### Preparation

You need permits for all overnight walks. They are available from the entrance or the ranger's office at Tidal River. During holiday times you may need to book (telephone 056 87 1220). In the north of the park walking parties are limited to six, and only 12 people can camp at any campsite each night. There is also a limit of two nights at each campsite.

Water may be scarce in the north, especially in summer. Check water availability with rangers and be prepared to carry plenty with you.

Fires are permitted all year round in this part of the park, except on total fire ban days, but must be in the fireplaces provided. There are no other facilities at the top end of the Prom except for a pit toilet at Tin Mine Cove.

Snakes are prevalent in warmer months, so wear good boots, gaiters and know the treatment for snake-bite.

### When to visit

If you want solitude, avoid holiday periods. Also, be warned, the weather can be unpredictable and unseasonal at any time of the year. Wilsons Promontory is directly in the path of cold, wet winds which whip up from the Antarctic and

contribute to the above-average rainfall. Tidal River's rainfall is 1000 millimetres, nearly twice that of Melbourne.

Between the end of April and September it can be very cold, wet and windy, but you can still luck-in with the odd stretch of crisp, clear days. If you don't like sharing tracks with snakes, avoid summer—which is also the time when drinking-water may be scarce. Late spring and early summer—out of holiday season—are probably the ideal times.

### Maps

A good map covering all Wilsons Promontory is the Vicmap 1:50 000 *Wilsons Promontory National Park Outdoor Leisure Map*, 1991 edition. It comes with brief track notes, history and other local information printed on the back. (The previous edition, 1989, had incorrect track information and should not be used for the northern circuit walk.)

Brief track notes are also available in the notes, *Walking Track Guide 2—Northern Section*, which are better than the inadequate information contained in the booklet, *Discovering the Prom on Foot* (published by the Department of Conservation & Environment, and the Victorian National Parks Association), which appears designed for walks south of Tidal River.

### Access

The park is situated 240 kilometres south-east of Melbourne. Access is by the South Gippsland Highway to Meeniyan (from the west) or Foster (from the east), then south through Fish Creek and Yanakie to the park entrance. All roads to the entrance are sealed and in excellent condition.

All northern walks start at the Millers Landing car-park. After passing through the entrance, drive along the main road for about ten kilometres. Turn left at Five Mile Road for Millers Landing. Follow this well-graded dirt road for two kilometres to the car-park. ■

The newcomer picked up the object and began to chew. We became curious and decided to take a closer look. Surprisingly, we found the remains of a mutton-bird. Apparently kangaroos and wallabies (which, technically, are herbivorous) will occasionally seek mineral supplements from animal carcasses, or by licking salt from seaside rocks. We retired imagining killer-kangaroos devouring sleeping campers to supplement their diet.

The next morning we woke early to catch the low tide and make our way round the rocks to Three Mile Beach. At times the scramble, over about a kilometre, proved difficult. It's easy to lose balance carrying a heavy pack on steep and slippery rocks and often we had to remove our packs to make a tricky traverse. Luckily there was only a light sea swell. This route would be dangerous, perhaps impossible, at high tide or in big seas. We were jubilant when we made it to the rarely visited Three Mile Beach. Breakfast soon followed at the base of Lighthouse Point at the northern end of the bay. We then set out for Tin Mine Cove.

We were greeted at the cove by a blustery, direct hitting south-westerly wind and so camped in the tinder-dry, sheltered upper camping ground. We

found the bleak, cold cove and dry, lifeless campsite a let-down after our Johnny Souey paradise, but we were pleased to be alone.

The next day was warm, clear and sunny. We spent our time on the beach, swimming, diving and exploring. A few people in boats stopped to barbecue fish or use the north's only pit toilet, but we kept a comfortable distance, not yet ready for civilization.

Late in the afternoon, three weary hikers emerged from the southern end of the cove. They had mountain-biked and hiked their way from the car-park, missed the track over Tin Mine Hill and had consequently spent the past two hours traversing rocks round the point—35 kilometres in all. They had just come for the weekend and were returning the next day, and did we know where the water was to be found?

At about the same time we saw something large moving in the water near the shore line. It appeared to be just under two metres long and it was cruising up and down in the shallows, parallel to the beach. We later decided that it was probably a hammer-head shark and were glad we hadn't seen it earlier when diving and swimming in the same area.

There was also a tiny, hooded tern by the water. It was wrapped in fishing-line and unable to move. We removed a hook from its wing and cut the line from around its body. It slowly began to open its wings and eventually righted itself, flapping around for a while, exhausted. It eventually disappeared; presumably it flew away.

We had studied the map for the journey to Barry Creek and woke early on a still,

sunny morning, prepared for the day's hike.

We walked up over Tin Mine Hill and made it almost to the end of Chinaman Long Beach by nine o'clock. The beach walk was fascinating. We saw large flocks of black swans dining offshore on sea-grass. Giant red kangaroos bounded along the sand leaving tracks which showed just how far they can leap and how deeply their powerful feet penetrate the sand. Wombat and possum tracks

and heathy, up to head-height in parts. We were ill prepared in our shorts. Some sections were dense, green and jungle-like, others swampy. The soft-bottomed river-arms made progress slow. This was the height of summer and we wondered what it must be like to negotiate these parts during winter.

For five hours the track was overgrown and orange ribbons were the only signs that we were headed in the right direction. The vegetation was so high



were evident as were the popping and crackling soldier crabs. Overhead we saw sea eagles, albatross and herons. It was a beautiful start to the morning, which left us ill prepared for what was to follow.

The guidebook described the walk to Barry Creek as occasionally 'damp underfoot after heavy rain', which, we were to discover, was an understatement. Also, our 1:50 000 Vicmap (1989, first edition) showed a track which basically followed the coast to the campsite. This, we discovered (first from experience and later from the 1991 second edition of the map), was inaccurate.

After turning on to the track from the beach the going was fairly easy, along an old and now disused four-wheel-drive track. The track notes said to follow the orange or pink ribbons, which we did for the first few metres; then they disappeared for about a kilometre. This made us a little nervous, but a compass check showed that we were heading in the right direction.

The ribbons eventually reappeared and then the real fun began...We realized that our map was wrong. We were well inland. The vegetation was thick, sharp

that it was difficult to take a compass bearing and there was a feeling that we were not making real progress. Dispirited, we stopped for lunch. Mosses descended immediately.

We hauled on our packs and set off once more into the dense jungle. The break we needed came sooner than expected. Ten minutes later we arrived at the campsite.

Barry Creek was something of an oasis after the rough terrain we had passed through. Nestled next to the bustling creek, it was cool and dark, crammed with moist mosses and ferns...and mosquitoes in such numbers that they eventually rendered the site's haven-like qualities void.

Our food was low, as was our tolerance of the multitude of insects. We therefore decided to bypass Barry Creek and walk out to the car-park. With our permit safely back in the 'Returned Hikers Permits' box, the hot showers of Tidal River beckoned. ■

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## Northern Prom





# MABO AND NATIONAL PARKS

Geoff Mosley and Hal Wootten present two views

The Commonwealth Government's recently announced plans to implement the High Court decision on the *Mabo Case* and compensate Aborigines for dispossession have created considerable uncertainty about the future of the National Parks and other conservation reserves.

The High Court said that native title continues where 'the appropriation and use is consistent with the continuing concurrent enjoyment of native title over the land (eg land set aside as a National Park)'. This will be determined by special tribunals set up to examine claims. In addition, as part of the national Aboriginal reconciliation policy, the Prime Minister is during the same period proposing to compensate those Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders who will not benefit from the *Mabo Case*. Various proposals have been made which would involve National Parks around Australia being included in this compensation package.

In the general debate, federal ministers, officials and Aboriginal spokespersons have emphasized that there is no threat to private land and economic interests, implying that either National Parks are not threatened or that they are of lesser importance. The discounting of nature conservation by governments and industry is something with which conservationists are very familiar but there is a danger that there will be no body or group to champion the wider interests of the community in the parks.

The starting point for a resolution of these matters is the better understanding of the cultural interests which both Aborigines and non-Aborigines have in the land. For many years conservationists erred by virtually ignoring the Aboriginal interest in natural areas; now the limited understanding which Aborigines have of the importance of natural areas for the new settlers is a part of the problem of finding a solution which will be mutually beneficial.

National Parks are meant to be a permanent means of protecting selected areas of the natural environment. Over the last 20 years much effort has been devoted to making sure that areas representative of all the different types of country have been included. They are the collectively owned property of all Australians—including those as yet unborn—and provide an opportunity for continuing contact with nature for the descendants of

people who only a few hundred years ago were wrenched from the land by enclosures, clearances, industrialization and the growth of large cities. Many of the parks contain features of international significance so that in this sense they are the property of the people of the whole world.

The parks and reserves are in effect systems serving multiple park purposes. They cover only about seven per cent of the terrestrial environment and are not yet complete. Additions are most likely to come from vacant crown land which also may be subject to land claims.

There are undoubtedly some mutual benefits to be gained from the most obvious way of trying to reconcile the two interests—joint ownership and/or co-management—but there are also possible incompatibilities. These include reduced security of tenure for the parks (that is, their future no longer being determined by the highest body—Parliament), and the possibility of developments in parks which conflict with the objectives of maintaining naturalness.

If Aboriginal ownership is to be meaningful and effective, it will include the right not to enter into a joint arrangement. Such a right was exercised when Australia's largest wildlife reserve, the Tanami Wildlife Sanctuary, was extinguished following granting of the land claim. It will also include the right to end such an arrangement. If some existing or proposed parks lose or do not gain park status, this will reduce the effectiveness of the park system to which they belong.

Similarly, genuine ownership would include the freedom to allow mineral, pastoral, logging and tourist development, the use of vehicles in wilderness areas and the restriction of access. Charging an entrance fee is a possibility. The co-management of Kakadu and Uluru National Parks has by and large been a success and forms a valuable model but there is no guarantee that these achievements will be repeated.

The idea held by some people that the parks are dispensable and can be simply handed over as compensation for dispossession without careful consideration of whether this is in the net community interest is the most alarming part of the current situation. A genuine concern about Aboriginal compensation would see some economically valuable lands made available as well as those areas for

which ownership is proved through a traditional, continuing association.

It is to be hoped that there will be enough public interest in the fate of Australia's hard-won parks to ensure that they are not simply used as a convenient means of righting an old wrong. ■

*Geoff Mosley is a well-known conservationist who is currently working as Programme Co-ordinator of the Fourth National Wilderness Conference, to be held in Sydney in October 1993. He is a former Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation.*

In *Mabo*, the High Court overturned the manifestly unjust and fictitious doctrine of *terra nullius*, and recognized that when white people came to Australia, Aboriginal communities owned land under 'native title'. The court rejected the view that this title was automatically extinguished by the declaration of British sovereignty, and recognized it as part of the common law.

Native title could be passed on to descendants and under some circumstances still survive today, as it did in Eddie Mabo's Murray Islands. However, it could be lost in two ways. If the native custom from which native title derived disappeared—whether because groups died out, or ceased to acknowledge their customs, or lost their connection with the land—the native title died also. This has obviously happened in much of Australia.

Even if Aboriginal communities can trace their descent back to original owners in 1788, and show that they have maintained native custom (perhaps in a modified form), and their connection with particular land, they still have another hurdle. The Crown had the power to extinguish native title, and transferring it into private ownership had this effect. Again, this has happened in much of Australia.

Hence only crown land remains open to legal claim, and even here the title will have been lost if the Crown has appropriated the land to a use inconsistent with continued native title; for example, public buildings, roads, or railways.

If Aborigines wish to claim land in a National Park, they must first pass all the tests set out above, and then establish that the dedication as a National Park is not inconsistent with continued native title. The details of National Park regimes differ in the



various States and Territories, but overall there is a lot of room for argument that they do extinguish native title. However, in an aside that does not bind courts in the future (because it was unnecessary for the *Mabo* decision), Mr Justice Brennan said that appropriation and use as a National Park would not extinguish native title.

Although not binding, this statement is obviously valuable support for Aborigines who can pass the other tests for asserting native title, and there is further support in the growing acceptance of the concept, embodied in Commonwealth, Northern Territory, Queensland and proposed New South Wales laws, that it is possible to have National Parks on land owned by Aborigines, and on which Aborigines reside on terms set out in the management plan.

Hence there is room for argument, stronger in some jurisdictions than in others, that native title survives in a National Park. In addition, in Commonwealth, Tasmanian and possibly Queensland parks, general provisions in National Parks Acts designed to protect existing interests may unintentionally operate to protect native title if it still existed when the park was established (an unlikely event in Tasmania despite its significant Aboriginal population).

But even if native title does survive, it does not affect the continued existence of the park. Most, perhaps all, provisions of the Act, regulations and management plan will bind the Aboriginal title-holders in the same way as other people.

There is a possibility that in some cases the existence of native title may invalidate the establishment of a park. This will be so if the relevant Act does not permit a park to be established on land over which any private title exists—which is the case under the present Northern Territory Act, and in relation to marine parks under the Commonwealth Act. It may also be the case if the park has been established in contravention of the Racial Discrimination Act, which since 1975 has required that Aboriginal title be given no less protection than other titles. This requirement will also have to be observed in creating future parks.

Hence it may turn out that native title survives in some parks and that other parks may not be validly established. There is a third concern, namely that even if an Aboriginal group is unable to establish native title, it may be given title as part of some compensation package.

How should conservationists react to this? Not, I would hope, by advocating the extinguishing of existing native title. We are talking only about the title of groups which have managed to hang on to their land amidst all the turmoil and suffering of the last 200 years. Surely conservationists, who often feel the suffering of their own ancestors forced off the land a few centuries ago, are not going to support this being done to living people to whom their land means so much. Most conservationists are humanistic or spiritual people who could not tolerate such a gross and cruel denial of human rights.

What is the necessity?



Within reach at last? Drysdale River area, Western Australia. George Kulek

If existing parks are to be transferred to Aboriginal title as part of a compensation package, we can expect that it will only be done after negotiation of terms to ensure the continuance of the park. Similar negotiation can be expected where native title co-exists with a park, as the Aboriginal title-holders cannot ignore the legal rules governing the use of the park, and will get significant benefits from their title only by negotiation.

Obviously, if any existing parks are found to have been invalidly established, some solution will have to be worked out and legislated, but in all probability it can be an agreed one in the few cases where the problem might arise.

Kakadu, Uluru, Gurig and Nitmiluk are examples of National Parks on land which Aborigines own and on which they reside. They show how wrong is the assumption that title to National Park land will be of little value to Aborigines unless they can use it in ways inconsistent with National Park objectives.

In fact, title with restricted use is highly valuable to Aboriginal people as it gives them leverage to negotiate many things of importance to them. These include protection of sacred and significant sites and the environment generally, a major voice in

management, rent, a share of park takings, training and employment, business opportunities in tourism and other services, and recognition of their cultural and historical identity.

Increasing population and scarcity of natural areas is likely to make these rights more significant as time goes by, so that Aboriginal people will have adequate incentive to continue the arrangement. In any event parliamentary authority can insist on preserving the National Park, a situation which would limit the freedom of Aboriginal owners to use their land in other ways, but is far preferable to dispossessing them. It should be remembered that to Aborigines land is not a commodity up for sale, their title is inalienable, and the duty to protect the land for ever is a fundamental part of their relationship with it.

Conservationists should not abdicate their role of championing National Park values, but there is no need to join the redneck developers who want to undermine *Mabo* by denigrating Aborigines and denying their rights. Rather, they should see Aboriginal communities as natural allies, and help them to gain a vested interest in the continuance of Australian National Parks. ■

Hal Wootten QC is a former President of the Australian Conservation Foundation and Royal Commissioner into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

## WILD CLIMBING



# NOT YOUR AVERAGE COUPLE

Greg Pritchard profiles the high-achieving and eccentric Jon and Brigitte Muir—mountaineers and adventurers

**C**ome to India. We'll have a big party. Tapovan is a big field of flowers. It will be fun!" These were Jon Muir's words to me in 1986. The plan was to go to their base camp at Shivling, party and then go off to explore the subcontinent while they attempted the mountain climb. It sounded good. Later, waist-deep in snow, wearing runners and jeans, I was not convinced. Sure, the previous year Tapovan, the paddock at the base of Shivling, had been full of flowers but that was later in the year. This year the snow-line started eight kilometres below. It was very cold and I was not equipped to cope. I whinged horribly, even during the party. But up in the hills, Jon was a new man. It was as though he had returned home.

Adventure Plus is the name of Jon and Brigitte Muir's new company. It also aptly describes their lives.

They are unique in the Australian climbing community, which is, itself, very different from mainstream Australian society. They are not your average couple. Between them they have climbed the highest summits on six of the world's continents, and they have designs on the seventh. The Muirs are at home on the world's highest mountains just as they are in the small Wimmera town of Natimuk, western Victoria, near the infamous Mt Arapiles, Mecca of Australian climbing, where they live.

Their tiny house is crammed full of things collected from many years of world travel and from exploring Australia. Their den of antiquities is overflowing with books, photos and memorabilia. Jon's passion for weird things is evident; skulls and bones abound. There are also many paintings of mountains—one of Brigitte's passions. Now, with their new business, the house incongruously sports a computer and a fax machine.



Jon Muir in a bivouac high on Shivling, Indian Himalayas, during the first ascent of the Southwest Pillar. Brigitte Muir. **Opposite**, another photo (of Brigitte this time) taken on the Shivling climb and emphasizing the seriousness of the undertaking. Jon Muir

Although they have often travelled and climbed together, stood together on many mountain summits, they remain individuals. If their dreams are similar, their characters are distinct.

Jon stood on the summit of Mt Everest and smoked a cigarette. His appearance is unusual. Jon is a shaggy-headed bear

of a man, and very strong. He is excitable, boisterous, and has a hearty laugh to match. His wardrobe, eccentric and eclectic, includes a pink knitted singlet, floppy Indian trousers, scarves, a variety of medals and badges, and a Russian fur hat. His arms are usually bare and he wears thongs regardless of the weather. A casual disregard for cold is useful in his line of work.

While not quite the diminutive, blonde ice-lady the press has portrayed, Brigitte is nevertheless a contrast to Jon. She is more focused and serious. She is not one

to be overshadowed by her 'famous' husband. Her drive and determination have made Brigitte Australia's most successful woman mountaineer. However, she humbly scoffs when described as a role model for other women.

Their origins are also disparate. Jon was conceived in Scotland and he and his sister travelled half the world as footsies aboard, oddly enough, the P&O liner *Himalaya*. The twins were born and grew up in Wollongong, the industrial city overshadowed by Mt Keira with its rugged scarp. He admits that the mountain's presence had an effect on him. He tells of seeing, at the age of 15 and searching for a career direction, a documentary called *Everest the Hard Way*

about a successful British attempt on the 8872 metre peak.

'I decided then and there to climb Everest and make a living from climbing.' He left school at the end of year ten and started rockclimbing, first on his own and then with a friend using a rope with which his sister had tethered her horse. He worked for nine months in a fruit and vegetable store and to date this remains his record for staying in a single job.

Brigitte grew up in the town of Jemeppe in a Belgian industrial valley. At

years later. When asked what it was about Australia that appealed to her, she explained: 'The space and sheep. I was not used to either.' Brigitte is now indifferent to sheep but her love for Australia's space continues.

I first met Jon when he lived in a tent, in the dust, at Mt Arapiles, home to many full-time climbers. Jon was trying to save for trips overseas. He had started going to New Zealand to learn the art of alpine climbing. 'In 1980 we lived on \$10 a week, \$12 if it was hot and we bought milkshakes', he says. 'All of my trips

## Brigitte Muir— climbing chronology Will Steffen

1975-76 Belgium, France, Italy, Spain—caving.

1977 Italy, France—climbed several Alpine peaks by standard routes.

1979 Canada—Logan Mountains: attempt on Lotus Flower Tower.

1980 Australia—rockclimbing at Mt Arapiles and other cliffs.

1981 New Zealand—climbing in the Mt Cook region.

1982 India—first Himalayan expedition. Ascents of Hanuman and D1 (about 6000 metres) with Elke Rudolph.

1983 European Alps—Gervasutti Pillar, West Face of Aiguille du Plan and other climbs with Jon Muir.

1984 Nepal—Imja Tse (Island Peak, 6189 metres) with Veronique Hill.

1985 India—single-day ascent of Kedarnath Dome (6830 metres).

India—attempt on South-west Pillar of Shivaling with Jon Muir, Ed Neve and Terry Tremble.

France—winter ascent of Mt Blanc with Jon Muir.

1986 India—ascend of West Peak of Shivaling (6505 metres) by new route on South-west Pillar. Fourteen days of continuous climbing in 'capsule style'. Rock pitches up to grade 21, A4, ice-climbing to Scottish grade five with Graeme Hill and Jon Muir.

1987 India—climbed to 6250 metres on Kedarnath Dome with Geoff Little.

Pakistan—joined NZ Karakoram expedition to Gasherbrum I. Climbed to 6800 metres: turned back by avalanche-prone slopes.

1988 Alaska—ascend of Mt McKinley, 6194 metres.

Beginning of Seven Summits quest.

1989 Tanzania—ascend of Mt Kilimanjaro (5895 metres) by Umbwe Route.

Argentina—solo ascent of Aconcagua (6960 metres) and attempt on South Face with Geoff Little and Jon Muir.

1990 Australia—ascend of Mt Kosciuszko (2228 metres). Ascent of main summit of Opera House, Sydney (Greenpeace action).

1991-93 Started international guiding business, Adventure Plus. ■



Brigitte, and friend, atop Aconcagua (6960 metres), the highest peak outside the Himalayas. Brigitte Muir collection. Right, the ill-fated 1984 attempt on the West Ridge of Mt Everest during which two lives were lost. Jon Muir

have been cheap ones, or at least all the ones I've paid for.'

Jon became one of the better climbers of Arapiles. Many of the hard routes from that period bear his name, often alongside that of Mark Moorhead. The two made a formidable and hilarious climbing partnership. When not climbing, Jon often just roamed Mt Arapiles, a complex mountain he knows better than anyone, and bouldered. His problem, Not the Height of Fashion, more a short, dangerous climb than a boulder problem, is formidable and rarely climbed. Jon was never inclined to venture into the really hard routes of the late 1980s when days, weeks and even years were necessary to climb a single route. However, in 1989, with Geoff Little, he added 50 new routes to the mountain in a whirlwind of activity.

the age of 17 she started caving and travelling for adventure, with trips to France, Italy and Spain. Although she has not caved for years, Brigitte has fond memories of it and is interested in taking it up again in Australia. However, it was not long before she progressed to climbing and in 1979 she travelled to the Logan Mountains in Canada.

The following year she went with (in her own words) 'a bunch of climbing bumbles on a tour of Australia; kangaroos, Ayers Rock and desert islands'. Brigitte first met Jon on this 1978 trip and returned to Australia in 1981 although their romance did not blossom until two



In 1983 Jon's impressive Himalayan career began when Mark Moorhead, Craig Nottle, Roddy MacKenzie and he—the infamous International Turkey Patrol—did an alpine-style (as opposed to expedition-style with lots of people and lots of gear) ascent of Changabang, a mountain in northern India. Before this trip Jon had climbed with Mark in Europe, doing seven classic routes which included the Central Pillar of Fréney and the Walker Spur. Brigitte had also gone to India to climb with Elke Rudolf. It was Brigitte's first Himalayan trip and together they climbed several smaller peaks, including Hanuman, a mountain that had defeated Roddy and Jon.

Jon and Brigitte returned to Australia and the dreaded 'grapes' which have been a major source of income for the Muirs and many climbers over the years. While picking at Dareton, Brigitte unexpectedly had to return to Belgium. Jon accompanied her and there they married. Together they went climbing in the Alps and, ever the romantic, Jon soloed the North Face of the Matterhorn during their honeymoon. Jon has soloed many routes, he feels it to be an 'intense, private sort of experience' about which he is reluctant to talk. This modesty permeates all conversations about his climbing.

In 1984 Jon, Peter Hillary and four others were sponsored to attempt an alpine-style ascent of the West Ridge of Mt Everest. Brigitte accompanied him to Base Camp and trekked in the area with her sister Veronique and another friend. While still on the mountain, news reached Jon that Tim Macartney-Snape and Greg Mortimer had climbed it from the Tibetan side, destroying any dreams Jon had of being the first Australian on the summit. Jon remembers being happy that one of his mates had achieved his goal. Jon's team was turned back high on the mountain by strong winds. On the way down, Fred From and Craig Nottle were killed. This, and the death of his best friend Mark Morehead on Makalu, in Nepal, affected him deeply. 'It took me a long while to recover from Everest and Mark's death.'

In between forays overseas, climbing mountains and grape-picking the Muirs lived at Arapiles in a tent Brigitte describes as 'the home Jon's parents bought us'. To the other climbers there, mostly male, all single, they seemed the perfect couple, in fact the only couple.

In 1986 Jon and Brigitte returned to Shiwling, a beautiful mountain in the Indian Garwhal Himalaya, which they had tried, without success, to climb the previous year. With another Wollongong climber, Graeme Hill, they were successful in climbing a new route on the mountain, the South-west Pillar. At the time it was probably the hardest technical climbing done by Australians in the Himalayas.

The following year found them back in the Garwhal. Jon soloed a traverse of the

Kedarnath peaks and Brigitte sat out storms with another party. After India, Brigitte travelled to Pakistan and attempted Gasherbrum I (Hidden Peak), an 8000 metre peak in the Karakoram Himalaya. 'It was a shitty season, lots of snow', she says. 'Four climbers got avalanched down the mountain trying the same route as us.' One of her memories from this trip is running very

happy happy; I was on a high for months after that, a real high.' Although he was part of a large expedition, Jon reached the summit alone and did not have to share his summit reverie. He spent an hour up there, in awe, shooting film, collecting some rocks.

I asked Jon how he felt on the summit of Everest, the most coveted of mountain tops. His answer was classic Muir. 'I felt



low on food towards the end. 'We had to beg food off trekking groups', she says.

At this time Jon was back on Everest. After four months on the mountain waiting for conditions to clear, they reluctantly abandoned their attempt. 'It was impossible that year, no one climbed it', he comments.

Only three months later Jon was back on Everest with the 1988 Bicentennial Expedition, a semi-military endeavour. He had spent the intervening three months resting—thin and tired from Nepal.

When Jon learned that he was to return to Everest he set about putting on weight, a task few people have the opportunity to enjoy. 'I'm lucky that for Himalayan climbing I find it works for me to be a little overweight. I thoroughly enjoy eating as much as I can for weeks on end.' This from a person who once said: 'Never eat anything you can't lift.' And he can lift a lot! Jon's preparation contrasts with Brigitte's training, which usually involves carrying large packs of rocks round Mt Arapiles.

On this 1988 attempt on the South Col Route Jon, and two others, joined ranks with the few who can claim to have stood on the highest part of this planet. Twelve years after the documentary which had altered the direction of his life, Jon had fulfilled his greatest desire. 'I was a very

incredibly isolated and insignificant, a speck of life in an inhospitable place. It was a different world full of strange feelings. I felt like a piss, and I had a piss. And I felt like a cigarette, and I had a cigarette.'

Jon, and seven others, received the Order of Australia for their part in the Bicentennial Expedition. The small rose of the OAM looks incongruous on Jon. 'I never really thought about getting a medal. Nevertheless, it's a nice shiny gold thing and I heard it's worth about \$1500.' Jon turned up at the award ceremony on crutches. While watching a storm, slightly drunk, he had fallen out of a tree in his backyard and broken his leg. Jon's parents, who attended the function, overheard other guests speculating that frost-bite must have been the cause of injury.

Brigitte, jealous that Jon was able to go to Everest, decided that rather than climb one mountain, she would climb seven, and so become the first woman to scale the highest peak on every continent. Thus was born her Seven Summits quest. The first person to climb all seven summits was Dick Bass, a 55-year-old American millionaire. He had the advantage of unlimited finance. To date Brigitte has successfully climbed five of the seven. The two remaining are the hardest, Everest (which she is currently

attempting); and the most expensive, Vinson in Antarctica.

While Jon was slogging up Everest, Brigitte went to Alaska and climbed the West Buttress (normal route) on Mt McKinley, the highest peak in North America. She travelled to Africa and climbed Mt Kilimanjaro by the Umbwe Route (through the jungle) and then up the Western Breach Route to Kibo, its highest summit.



Brigitte in the French Alps for a winter ascent of Mt Blanc. The fabled Walker Spur (the first Australian ascent of which was by John Fantini and Michael Stone in 1969) is in profile in the background. Jon Muir

Continuing on her summit quest, Bri and Jon (recovered from his accident) went to Russia to climb Mt Elbrus and to Argentina for Aconcagua. On Aconcagua they attempted the French route, the original route on the formidable South face. It was in bad condition and dangerous. As Brigitte says: 'A real classic, really scary and really shitty.' Yet she regards Aconcagua as their most successful climb because together they 'went to hell and back...and survived!'. Jon reiterates this. 'It was really difficult, really stormy, really hard. We did the best we could.'

In Australia, another expedition took them to Mt Kosciuszko, possibly the most feared of the seven summits. When they can arrange the money they will be off to try Vinson, the last mountain on Brigitte's list; assuming success on Everest.

Their appetite for adventure is never dulled. Jon and Brigitte were easily

convinced to bag one of Australia's few remaining virgin summits, one of the soft and scary Twelve Apostles in Victoria. It is a summit they both remember fondly, albeit with a slight tremble in voice and knees. A large black-and-white photo taken by Brigitte of Jon sitting on the summit with his mascot Krondorf and another climber hangs in their kitchen.

When I wrote this, Jon was on a small personal expedition to the Coorong, in South Australia, where he lived off the land for two weeks. Brigitte was at home working on their new business, Adventure Plus. This small guiding company offers trips to all the summits Brigitte and Jon have climbed, as well as many others. 'Anywhere, any time' their brochure proclaims. They see the business as a way to escape the nine-to-five existence many people lead and which they dread, and also to demonstrate their desire to do a few things differently.

Some may see their life of travel and climbing as only fun and glamour. The down side is hard work, sacrifice and at times dire poverty; years of picking grapes and other bit-work, scraping money together for expeditions. They hope that in the future the business will help them to avoid this. Jon says his desires are simple: 'I don't want to make

millions of dollars, I don't want to slave away twelve months a year.

'All of my travel in the past has been into the snow, up some grim mountain, struggling away for weeks on end, almost getting killed by avalanche, frozen to death, starved, dehydrated, hit by rocks and ice, falling down crevasses, and a few times I've even almost died laughing.' Jon's sense of humour has probably saved him many times.

Some are critical of this strange-looking man who never seems to do any 'real' work. This doesn't worry Jon. 'I'm normal; it's everyone else who's weird', he says. Brigitte agrees: 'Too many people are too far removed from their selves. We've got a toilet out the back. Does that make us unconventional?'

In Herman Hesse's novel *Knulp*, God explains to the protagonist that He had needed a wanderer and dreamer, not a doctor or lawyer. God said that He needed Knulp to leave people with 'a little nostalgia for freedom'. This is a good way to describe what is shared by the Muirs with those they meet. ■

Greg Pritchard started climbing in Nowra in 1975. He has climbed extensively throughout Australia and is a prolific writer and publisher of 'underground' climbing magazines such as *Screamer*, *Force* and *THE*. He now continues such nasty habits where he lives in Natimuk.

## Jon Muir—climbing chronology Will Steffen

**1976-77** Australia—rockclimbing, often solo, on cliffs near Wollongong.

**1978-80** Australia—many solo ascents at Mt Arapiles and elsewhere, including new routes on sight up to grade 25.

**1979** New Zealand—first trip to Southern Alps. Climbed many moderate peaks by standard routes with Russell Chudleigh, Geoff Hill and Graeme Hill.

**1979** New Zealand—South Face of Mt Hicks, Sheila Face of Mt Cook with Roddy Mackenzie, and many other ascents.

**1980-81** New Zealand—Southern Alps: numerous ascents.

**1982** France—Walker Spur of Grandes Jorasses; Central Pillar of Prémy; Mt Blanc: North Face of Courtes; North and West Faces of Grandes Charmonz; West Face of Petit Jorasses; and other ascents with Mark Moorhead and Craig Nottle.

India—first trip to Himalayas. Ascent of South-west Pillar of Changabang (6664 metres) in alpine style with the International Turkey Patrol—Roddy Mackenzie, Mark Moorhead and Craig Nottle.

**1983** European Alps—Mt Blanc and other ascents with Brigitte Muir; North-east Spur of Droites; North-east Face of Piz Badile, solo, in two hours and six minutes, a speed record; North Face of Matterhorn, solo.

**1984** Nepal—attempt on West Ridge of Mt Everest (8872 metres). Climbed to 8220 metres with Fred From, Peter Hillary, Kim Logan, Roddy Mackenzie and Craig Nottle—Nottle and From were killed in separate falls.

**1985** India—ascents of Kedarnath Dome (6830 metres); attempt on South-west Pillar of Shivaling (6543 metres) with Brigitte Muir, Ed Neve and Terry Tremble.

France—winter ascent of Mt Blanc with Brigitte Muir.

**1986** New Zealand—ascents of Mt Cook.

India—first ascent of West Peak of Shivaling (6505 metres) by South-west Pillar. Fourteen days of continuous climbing in 'capsule style'. Rock pitches up to grade 21, A4; ice-climbing to Scottish grade five, with Graeme Hill and Brigitte Muir.

European Alps—Frontier Ridge on Mt Maudit, solo; solo attempts on North Face of Grandes Jorasses.

**1987** New Zealand—ascents of several peaks in the Mt Cook region.

India—first traverse of Kedarnath Peak (6968 metres), Kedarnath Dome (6830 metres) and Kirti Bimak (6500 metres), solo, in 41 hours.

Nepal—attempt on South Pillar of Mt Everest (8872 metres). Climbed to 7500 metres, defeated by continuous jet-stream winds, with Peter Hillary, Kim Logan and Michael Rheinberger.

**1988** Nepal—ascents of Mt Everest (8872 metres) by South-east Ridge (South Col Route). Member of the Australian Bicentennial Everest Expedition. Reached summit alone as climber/photographer.

**1989-90** Australia—many solo ascents of Mt Arapiles and elsewhere including new routes on sight up to grade 25.

**1989** Argentina—ascents of Aconcagua (6960 metres), solo in one day. Attempt on South Face of Aconcagua with Geoff Little and Brigitte Muir.

**1990** Russia—Mt Elbrus (5642 metres).

Australia—ascents of main summit of Opera House, Sydney (Greenpeace action).

**1991-93** Started international guiding business, Adventure Plus. ■

# KATOOMBA TO JENOLAN—ALMOST!

A salutary Blue Mountains bushwalking tale, by John Gardiner

**M**y sleeping-bag is snug and warm. It's going to be a long night, first on this hip-bone, then on the other. A night for thoughts...

The brain runs on overdrive when you're tramping along a track. It functions like a deep river, swirling and eddying as it races by. Thoughts surge to the surface, but if they're not held, they disappear again.

Once your stride is into rhythm, breathing becomes hard and regular. The surface level of the brain wants to count and has to be stopped if you want to stay sane. Often when I intervene, some silly ditty pops up to replace the counting: 'M.i.c.k.e.y-M.o.u.s.e', or 'You'll nev-er walk a-lone, you'll nev-er walk a-lone!'

Now there's an irony! Here I am doing just that—walking alone. Four days with only my stupid brain for company!

I shiver in my bag and draw the hood closer. There is no moon. The stars seem almost within reach.

My brain says to me: 'Well, my boy, I've got to hand it to you, you're consistent! Almost everything you did wrong last time you've managed to stuff up again. Your potential for learning from past mistakes is certainly limited.'

This was the second time I'd attempted to walk from Katoomba to Jenolan Caves by Breakfast Creek and the Jenolan River. Last time had been a nightmare, and I'd failed. The attempt had ended with me staggering on to the Kanangra road and begging a lift from a passing grader driver.

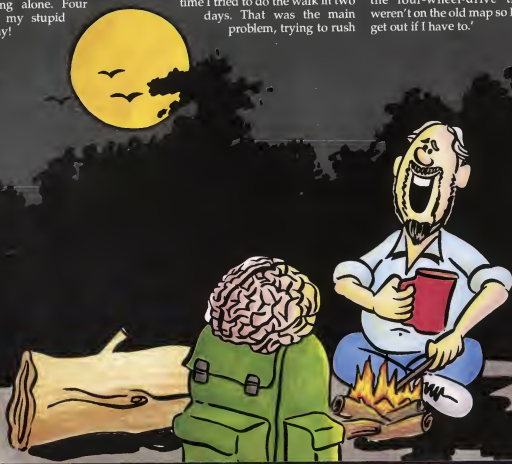
'That's not fair, brain', I reply. 'I have learnt a little. Let's not be too harsh. Last time I tried to do the walk in two days. That was the main problem, trying to rush

it, not knowing the territory. This time I've allowed four days. I'm now two days from Katoomba and more than half-way there.'

I roll over, sliding the zips in the bivvy-bag so that I maintain an air-hole in front of my face. The stars are starting to become less clear. There must be a mist developing, but there is no sign of cloud. The unceasing clamour of the Jenolan River obscures all other sounds.

Two days to go. Two wonderful days behind me, and I have plenty of time.

I say to myself: 'I have done better than last time, brain, learnt from past mistakes. This trip has been carefully planned. I've reduced the weight I'm carrying. I've checked out the route and know it's passable, my new map shows the four-wheel-drive tracks which weren't on the old map so I know how to get out if I have to.'



Done better, have you? What about the last two days?

I have to admit that there remains room for improvement. Virtually every wrong turning I'd taken last time, I've managed to follow again. I failed to find the track that leads from the fire tower on Narrow Neck to Carlons Head and so had to scrub-bash through a swamp. Then, below the spikes, I missed the horse-track that leads to Carlons Creek, and once again spent much time battling through scrub, up and down, in and out of gullies, walking to a compass bearing. When I finally found the track, I hurried ahead and missed the turn-off, ending up on Bellbird Ridge, 300 metres above where I should have been, with a half-hour walk to retrace my steps.

But they were minor set-backs—all part of the fun—and I was none the worse for them. On Bellbird Ridge, I sat on a rock in the sun, had a drink and some scroggin, listened to the countless bellbirds and whip-birds in the valley below, and felt much at peace.

'And what about Scrubbers Hump?' asked my brain.

'Shut up. Let's think about some of the good things for a change. Don't be so negative.' I was annoying myself.

I'd camped in Breakfast Creek on the first night. After setting up my bivvy-bag and cooking-gear, I'd washed, then nestled into the bag and dozed till around 8 pm. After cooking by torch-light, I'd settled down once more and read till 11 pm. My sleep through the night had been intermittent, providing plenty of time for thought. As usual, as the sky seemed to lighten, a deep sleep had overtaken me.

It had been a crisp morning, but not cold. There'd been a thin mist above and I'd known there would be sunshine later.

After breakfast, it took a while to attend to my blisters. There's no doubt about it, I'd thought, my dear old boots are for the chop. After all these years of love and understanding, they've let me down with a vengeance this time. And what have I done to deserve it? I've cared for these boots as if they were my own children. Snow-sled, washed laces, mud scraped off, the lot. And this is all the thanks I get—four blisters after only a single day.

Just as I was about to leave, I noticed—above my head but out of reach—a twig swinging violently from side to side. There was no wind. The other branches were frozen, yet this twig—just a small one, two leaves, a forked stem and a thickened deformity at the end—was moving.

Being out of reach, there was no way I could discover why it moved. Perhaps the lump at the end was a chrysalis about to burst out as a butterfly. Whatever it was, it brought home to me how little I understood of this complex world. There was at any instant immeasurable activity occurring around me, most of which was

quite incomprehensible. Why is it then that it all seemed so benign? I felt comfortable here in this valley. I felt welcome.

As the sun dispersed the mist I set out, leaving the frantic twig to do whatever it was doing.

Not far from Cox's River I encountered a large party of bushwalkers. All clad in full wet-weather gear, all clutching staffs in their right hand, they were tramping in single file up the middle of the stream, heads down. Most of them didn't see me, or hear my hello over the noise of the stream. Only the last, a woman, smiled as we passed.



The Jenolan River—trout, wild ducks and pollution. **Right:** Cox's River near Breakfast Creek junction. **David Noble Far right:** John Gardiner and his son on a return visit. **Gardiner**

I suppose they were enjoying themselves.

It was nearly midday when I arrived at Cox's River. The open areas on the eastern bank were in full sunshine and the river itself, in flood only a week ago, was fuller than I'd seen before, flowing fast, khaki in colour and worthy of respect.

It took me almost an hour to decide where to cross and my choice was by no means ideal. Near the bank was a fast, narrow channel. Beyond that, extending all the way across, was shallow, broken water. I would have to swim the channel, but after that it would be easy, especially with a staff. It was lunch-time and the sun was pleasant, so I boiled a billy and feasted on crispbread, smoked oysters and olives. Then I stripped off to trunks, boots and socks, repacked all the important items in my pack inside two plastic bags and found a staff. After walking well upstream from the shallow area, I took a breath and launched myself, on my pack, into the channel.

Immediately, the pack flipped over. I hadn't expected that and nearly let it go. When I regained control I could see that I was moving rapidly towards the shallow area and would be past it in a few seconds. I kicked out trying to move

diagonally across the current but without effect. While wondering what to do next, one of my feet touched bottom. The water was only 150 centimetres deep, and I was able to edge sideways as the current carried me down.

In no time I was out of the channel, with my pack on my back (ten kilograms heavier, pouring water out of the flaps), edging sideways across the river, my weight on the staff, facing upstream.

Ahead lay the saddle known as Scrubbers Saddle, a very steep climb of 250 metres before the descent to the Jenolan River. Last time I'd climbed too far to the north, almost to the top of

Scrubbers Hump, some 130 metres higher. This time I would not make the same mistake. From the other side of the river, I'd looked carefully at the terrain, compared it to the maps, and decided where to start.

It was 2.30 pm when I began, clad only in trunks and a T-shirt. An hour later I looked down from the top of Scrubbers Hump. Due to excellent navigation, I'd managed to repeat my previous blunder. Below me and well to the south, I could see the saddle.

'Yes, Scrubbers Hump', chuckled my brain. 'You never learn, do you?' I hunched my knees up near my chin and shifted my weight trying to get comfortable. This was going to be a long night.

On my last attempt, the water in the Jenolan hadn't been as high and the blackberry bushes had been difficult to get through. This time it was different. Last week's storm had left its mark. For some three metres above the water the legacy of the recent flood was apparent. On the grassy banks, the river had combed the grasses in the whimsical pattern of its currents. Where it had encountered obstacles, they had been ripped out of the way. Trees, small and large, had come down everywhere, revealing their entail-like roots.

But the flood had also helped me. The stems of the blackberries had been



stripped of their claws by the flood. All that was left were de-barbed tentacles which offered no obstacle.

At 5.20 pm yesterday I'd stopped at this campsite after wading most of the way up the river. Tired from a hard day, I had been shivering, not so much from the cold as from fatigue. The campsite was somewhere before Mumbedah Creek, a smooth clearing of lush grasses

from where I sit, a small waterfall glistens in the sun.

It is 12.20 pm when I reach Sassafras Creek where I stop for lunch. Once there was a settlement here (the 'Old Station'), but all that remains is a huge clearing stretching well up the mountainside. Of course there is also the four-wheel-drive track, coming down from the north and heading with deceptive gentleness up

only managing to keep his distance. His rheumy eyes watch me with little interest.

Not far upstream the blackberry bushes disappear although there are patches of nettle and wandering Jew—colonials like ourselves and the trout. My brain says: 'Thank you, England, for the trout. Would you mind taking your blackberries and nettles back? We don't need them.'

The gorge develops slowly, but what a gorge it is! The boulders and the rock range in colour from white to bright pink



on sand. At this stage I would have preferred to have reached Sassafras Creek. That would have allowed more time for the unknown part of the walk—up through the gorges.

In order to make something out of the awful food one has to eat when camping, I'd packed some parmesan to make a spicy macaroni cheese. The result had been inedible. A little parmesan, perhaps. All parmesan? No. None the less, pea and ham soup, a Mars Bar and some port left me full and content.

Setting off at about 9.20 am today, I nearly trod on two huge brown trout. So far I must have seen 50 or 60 big ones. This valley is also full of ducks—mostly mallards. Everywhere I walk there are animals' droppings but all I've seen so far are a wallaby and a runaway heifer in Carlons Gully.

Today I am walking (wading?) in overpants and gaiters. I'll be in and out of the river all day and don't want to get too chilled.

At 10.40 am I stop for a rest at the first flowing stream past Mumbedah Creek. I can't drink the water from the polluted Jenolan River, so I fill my water-bottle, eat dried fruit and relax. The rattle and crackle of the rivers and streams dominate all sound. At every step, every turn, it changes in a constant interplay of tones; it is never boring, always relaxing to be near.

The sun is just penetrating through the light mist as I sit beside the gully. Once again it will be a cloudless day. Upstream

through the trees on the southern side—my path last trip. I would willingly die here rather than try to walk that savage track again. I now know that the path to the north leads to the Six Foot Track (which is in fact a four-wheel-drive fire track) and that in turn leads to the Jenolan Caves road.

The Old Station is private property and I am trespassing.

From now on it's unknown territory. Ahead is Hellgate Gorge, then another gorge and above that Jenolan Caves. It's no steep climb—only about 450 metres compared to 850 metres to the tops of the ridges on either side—and I've one and a half days to walk the same distance as I've walked this morning.

It's clear that this route isn't much used. Above Sassafras Creek there are no footprints. Why not? What lies ahead?

Before this walk I'd spoken to the only people I could find who knew anything about the Jenolan River—the guides at Jenolan Caves. Could one walk it? The answer was yes, it was passable, they took groups down once or twice a year as far as Sassafras Creek, where they were taken out again by four-wheel-drive.

'Well then,' says my brain, 'what are you waiting for. Off your bum and get going!'

I finish lunch and set off. It is 1.15 pm.

Initially the river is very similar to downstream. Trout are everywhere and there are quite a few ducks. I even see an old wallaby, probably 150 centimetres tall, but with his allotted time almost spent. He falls twice as he moves away,



and grey. They still look like granite, but are much larger and dramatically water-worn. In places the passage of water becomes constricted, with lots of narrow drops, none more than 150 centimetres. Sometimes the water-flow and steep sides force me to climb up the mountainside for a short way and drop back to the river further upstream.

This is a beautiful place.

Then once again my path is stopped by a small waterfall surrounded by large water-smoothed boulders. I backtrack intending to climb a short way up the north side and return to the river further upstream. This side seems to be cut by narrow, steep gullies which force me to climb higher and higher, and as I climb the rock-face becomes steeper.

It's not possible to see much of what lies above. On the other side of the river, I can see that the cliff-like outcrops of rock continue to the top of the ridge. Let's hope this side is different.

The change from an easy but steep slope is deceptive and gradual. Eventually, I realize that I am climbing a cliff-face. 'Wait a minute!', says my brain. 'You shouldn't be taking risks like this—you're not a mountaineer with chalky hands and technicolour pants, clinging to invisible cracks by your toe-nails and teeth. You're just a rather tired scrub-basher who likes both feet flat on the ground and who's terrified of cliffs.'

What do I do, keep going or retrace my steps? I am at least 80 metres above the river, and it's a long way back. I decide to press on. It will probably get better.

Then I come to a narrow cleft between two outcrops. I believe I can climb it, but not with my pack on, so I remove the pack and push it up ahead of me. You

stupid fool! It's in the way. You can't get past it, and you can't keep pushing it!

At that stage I realize I cannot go further. How crazy I've been! At once I resolve to return to Sassafras Creek and walk out along the fire track to the north. I start to descend.

But going down is worse than going up. I don't try to retrace my steps; in fact I can't understand how I got to where I am. There must be an easier way.

Within minutes I find myself edging down a near-vertical incline with a drop below of at least 25 metres, clinging to small shrubs or the occasional tree; footholds are slight faults in the rock-face. I decide to lower the pack first using my rope. There are a few overcropping trees that can stop the pack if I can control its direction.

The first attempt succeeds. The pack lies stable against a small tree. I use the rope looped over another tree to slide down between handholds.

But the second time is not successful. The pack keeps going past the shrub to which I try to direct it, and I can't pull it up again. As it slides further, the free end of the rope comes up to me. I can no longer use the rope to lower myself, and I can't pull the pack back up.

Against my better judgement, but with no alternative, I let the rope go. The pack slides only a short distance and wedges precariously against some small shrubs just above a steep drop.

If I ever get out of here, how will I retrieve my pack?

There is no way down for me, I have to go up. But I've only reached this location by lowering myself on the rope! It is then that panic engulfs me. Fear has been present in the background, but now it threatens to take over. I try to keep on top of it, keep moving.

I edge upwards, finding tiny handholds and clearing soil and moss from crevices with my boots. It is slow and laborious, and I am exhausted by the fear.

Then I find myself stuck with nothing to grasp but a small shrub. It can't possibly carry my weight. Once again panic sweeps over me and I freeze.

But my hold is precarious. My fingers start to ache and my calves tremble. 'Why not let go?' says an insinuating voice from within. 'You'll have to sooner or later. Get it over and done with!'

one of the steep gullies I had originally avoided.

There seems to be little hope of finding my pack, but I have to try. Wearing only a wet, sweaty T-shirt, and soaked overpants, boots and socks, I'm in trouble if I don't. In fact I almost trip over it after glimpsing the metallic reflection from my water-bottle. The strap which



An easier crossing when not in flood: Cox's River between Breakfast Creek and Jenolan River junction. Noble

Suddenly below me I hear a scraping noise and see my pack shoot out over the edge and disappear. Then I hear it crash below. For an instant I see myself shattered through the branches as I join it.

I grab the flimsy shrub and heave. My knee somehow wedges into a crevice and—with all my weight on the shrub—I drag myself up. Another handhold and my foot is on the shrub. Another lunge, a heave, and the worst is behind me. I don't dare to stop or look back.

After that, all is rather anticlimactic. I manage easily to reach the river using

held the bottle is ripped out, but otherwise the pack seems sound. When I put it on, one of the stiffeners digs uncomfortably into my back. I don't really care any more.

Fatigue drains my body of action. It is not my body—nothing seems to work of its own volition. Somehow I force myself to keep moving.

When I arrive back at Sassafras Creek it is 4.30 pm. Only three and a quarter hours earlier I had set out, full of confidence.

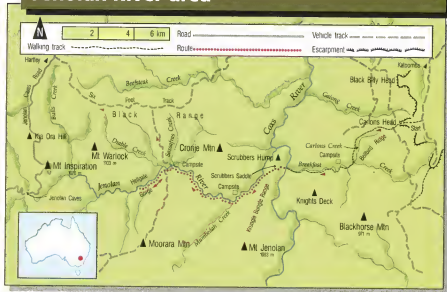
Despite the fall, all the gear in my pack is okay. Even the torch works. My evening meal consists of noodles, custard and apricots, and a Mars Bar. It is one of the finest meals I've ever eaten, almost like the first of a new life. At 7.30 pm I'm ready to sleep.

The next day I set out at 9 am and walk up the Six Foot Track, then along it to the main Jenolan Caves road and off down the road towards the caves. Eventually my blisters force me to thumb a lift. Sitting in a car for the last eight kilometres, I feel no satisfaction.

So there we are: attempt number two a failure. Will there be a third attempt? Probably. However, there will never be another solo walk. Perched on that cliff-face, almost unable to breathe because of fear, one of the currents of thought flowing through my brain made that solemn resolution. It was a pact. Whomever it was with, I swear it won't be broken. ■

John Gardiner often feels the draw of wild places. His favourite pastime is to 'sit alone on a rock, remote from civilization, and contemplate the ripple of water over pebbles'. However, most of the time he pursues his dual professions of engineer and writer.

## Jenolan River area



# A *ND THE WINNERS ARE...*

The best entries from the Escalade '93  
Photographic Competition



Winter tempest, Vik, Iceland.  
*Adrian Inch* has cross-country  
skied and climbed  
extensively in Canada,  
Sweden, Scotland and  
Iceland. Next year he plans  
to return and complete a ski  
traverse of Iceland. When  
not travelling, he works as a  
communications engineer.





Alpine climbing, Mt Cook, New Zealand. Matt Darby is a Melbourne-based photographer currently employed as a flight attendant. Keen on trekking, climbing and travel, Matt Darby is a regular contributor to *Wild*.







Rockclimbing, Tarana,  
New South Wales.  
*Susan Leanne Wright* lives in the  
Blue Mountains. She is a  
professional photographer,  
mainly of landscape and adventure.



# HIMALAYAN WHITE



## WATER



Kayaking thrills  
and culture shock  
in Nepal,  
by *Theodore Kossart*

**W**e had just finished four days of warm-up paddling on the Seti and Trisuli Rivers. Everyone felt confident and ready for more serious white water. All we had to do was hitch a ride back to Kathmandu with our kayaks.

Travelling by kayak in these parts is a ticket to instant popularity. Our arrival in a remote village would bring out half its population. Everyone curious to see five strangely dressed Westerners in their brightly coloured 'doongas' (polyethylene Dancer kayaks).

Unfortunately, we were not popular with the bus- or truck-drivers. They dismissed our pleas for a ride with a casual wave. 'Maybe we are in the wrong spot', ventured Damien. 'Maybe we should hide the kayaks in the bushes', was Rob's suggestion. Ian, the only Kiwi in the group, reminded us that in an hour it would begin to get dark. Fifteen minutes later a truck, stacked with sacks of molasses, stopped. We haggled a price, tossed kayaks in the back and jumped on top of the driver's cabin naively unaware of what lay ahead.

Seventeen sleepless and spine-pounding hours of pot-holes, blaring horns, revving engines, diesel fumes, near-accidents, stops to let the engine cool and we arrived back in Kathmandu. We had travelled only 120 kilometres along a major highway.

It took another day for our bodies and minds to recover from our first encounter with the Nepalese transport system. Then it was time to organize river permits, supplies, raft support and transportation for our next trip to the Tamba Kosi and Sun Kosi Rivers. The Tamba, a tributary of the Sun Kosi, involved two days of committed paddling away from roads and popular trekking routes. Dave, Damien and I decided that it sounded like a good run. Ian and Rob were not quite so sure. They would be content with the Sun Kosi given its higher volume and more widely spaced rapids. So the group split.

The bruising ride on the molasses truck convinced us to hire a privately owned

minibus. The morning was spent dropping the raft group at the Sun Kosi and the rest of us at the Tamba Kosi. We would meet again in two days' time.

A crowd of children from the local village, Charikot, came down to the river to farewell us on our trip down the

were replaced by the thunder of rapids...you could not see where they ended!

Following the lead kayak we hopped from eddy to eddy, searching for a safe path down through the rapids. It was impossible to separate one rapid from

wave or use the rapids for stunts such as enders or hole-surfing. Paddling the Tamba Kosi was enough!

The river kept up the pressure until halfway through the second day. Then, finally, the gradient began to ease. We survived the toughest section with one broken blade, two holed Dancers and one roll each. The water was now nice and cruisy, nothing too serious. We were still on a high from the intensity of the morning's kayaking when we came across a village, just in time for lunch. A serve of the ubiquitous rice and lentil meal, dahl bhat, and a few cups of tea brought us back to earth for the few hours of relatively sedate paddling down to the Sun Kosi.

Ahhh, the Sun Kosi. Bliss! The river, with its higher volume, forges through a magnificent valley, almost all the way to the Indian border. Six days of kayaking still lay ahead.

The raft arrived the next morning. It would now carry all our gear and food. This left us free to make the most of the rapids and the surfing waves. Nothing could be better!

Compared to the previous days on the Tamba Kosi, life on the Sun Kosi was enjoyably sedate. Each day we refused to get on the water until the mist parted, usually somewhere around 11 am. The flat stretches of water between rapids were times to relax and take in the slowly unfolding scenery.

The holiday atmosphere of the Sun Kosi suddenly got more serious when Ian became the first and only casualty of the

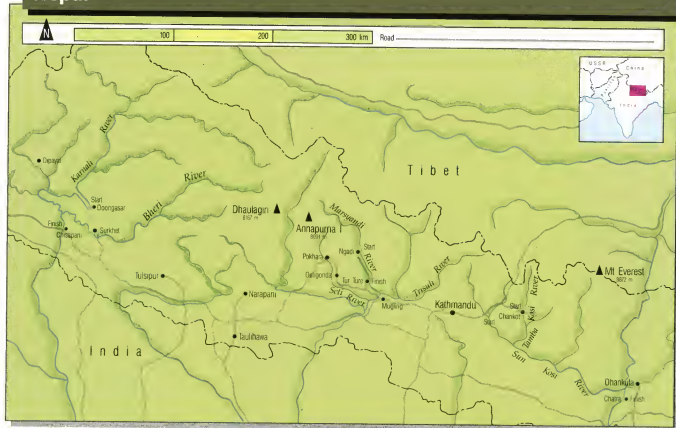


'Children ran from all directions yelling "Doonga, doonga, doonga"'. **Opposite**, one of the Nepalese engineering marvels on the Marsyandi River. **Previous page**, warming up on the Trisuli River. All photos Theodore Kossart

Tamba. Two hundred metres of fast-flowing water carried us away from the children who were running along the bank. Their cries of 'Bye-bye, bye-bye'

another. This was the most continuous water we had ever paddled: lining up drops, powering through hydraulics, avoiding boulders and making eddies. A roll took vital seconds, threatening loss of control and would place you at the mercy of the white-water avalanche. The consequences of a swim were unthinkable. It was out of the question to ride a

## Nepal







trip. It was at the first of the harder rapids. Half a metre too far to the right, he was slightly off line and about to enter the crux of the rapid—a reasonably sized but unpredictable stopper. The outcome was inevitable. Capsized by the water he was quickly washed free of the stopper's grasp. But something was wrong. Seconds passed by. He was unable to roll. Then he appeared. Before any of us could get to him, he had swum his boat to the bank. He looked in a bad way, sitting on the rocks holding his arm.

Ian's shoulder was dislocated. He could not go on. The only option was a one-and-a-half-day walk to the nearest road, followed by a 16-hour bus journey back to Kathmandu. There was nothing we could do but hire a porter from the local village to carry the boat, stock lan up with pain-killers and send him off with one of the Nepalese raft guides.

It was a pity as we were starting a section of big, 'hooty' rapids and 'hee-ug' surfing waves, known as the Jungle Corridor. We took another five unhurried days to paddle, drift and surf our way down the Sun Kosi to Chatra. Here the river fans out across the horizon as though reaching the sea.

We parted company with the Sun Kosi and again returned to Kathmandu to organize ourselves for the final two river trips. The first was the Marsyandi.

A one-day trek from the road-head to Ngadi (on the eastern side of the Annapurna circuit) brought us to the start of our most memorable days of

paddling in Nepal. Day one on the Marsyandi River: a nervous glance down the river to the next eddy, then a final sobering glance upstream. Towering 6000 metres above us stood the impressive Annapurna Range, a constant reminder of how far removed we were from our usual world of kayaking in Australia. Here we were on the Marsyandi River, with spectacular rapids to get the adrenalin pumping and spectacular scenery guaranteed to take our breath away.

Not a single bank inspection, not a single portage, not a single stretch of flat water, nothing but grade-four rapids all day. By the end of that day the Marsyandi had mentally and physically drained us

as no river had ever done before. We were elated but somewhat relieved when we found a small, secluded, sandy beach on which to camp. Downstream the rapids continued as they had all day. Sleep came easily despite the constant rumble of descending water.

After two more days of rapids and a little flat water, we reached the town of Tur Ture. When we stopped near a village, there was no hope of a peaceful campsite. Today was no exception. Even before we had pulled our kayaks up to the bank, the fracas erupted. Children ran from all directions yelling 'Doonga, doonga, doonga'. About 40 children quickly descended upon us. The relative peace of the village and a hot lunch

## The logistics

The logistics of kayaking in Nepal were not the nightmare I first imagined. While we gathered some preliminary information in Australia, most useful knowledge was accumulated by talking to raft guides and the small band of transient kayakers who were in Kathmandu at the same time. However, obtaining information on Nepal's rivers is now much simpler. Green Slime (aka Peter Knowles, an English kayaker, and David Allardice, a New Zealand raft guide and kayaker) have just published a guide to the rivers of Nepal (see Reviews, page 91). We used their drafts on the Marsyandi and the Tamra Kosi Rivers and found them most useful and reliable. This outstanding guide is almost essential and covers access, logistics, grades and the position of more serious rapids.

We took our own kayaks as luggage on the plane but it is possible to hire good-quality plastic kayaks in Kathmandu. Getting around is half the fun. It's a challenge to convince auto-rickshaw drivers to carry five kayaks: 'Sure, not a problem, you can fit on five kayaks, we do it all the time.' Most buses carry a roof-rack and so provide adequate but far from comfortable transport. If the bus doesn't go where you are headed, hitching a ride on a truck is the next option. Finally, if you still haven't arrived at your destination, hire a porter to carry the kayak—and walk.

Any experienced white-water 'yakist' should enjoy Nepal. There are easier rivers for the less experienced and there are also rafting tours. Nepalese rivers are no longer the sole domain of 'expert' expeditionary kayakers. ■

seemed inviting. Rob didn't mind staying behind to look after the precious 'doongas'.

On our return Rob told us that a knife and a pair of glasses had been stolen. The locals had seen the thief but had stayed quiet until now. So the local children took it upon themselves to find the thief. Rob followed them from village to village. Each time the culprit was described, each time the group was told that he lived in a village further down the track.

the highest-volume river in Nepal and it flows through a range of jungle-covered mountains. According to locals, the jungles contain leopards, tigers and mugger crocodiles. (There was no need to worry about the latter as they don't fancy human flesh.) According to kayakers, the river offers one of the best runs to be found anywhere.

We had been told that a good place to start was at the confluence of the Lahan Khola...or was that the Lahore Khola? We were not quite sure. None of us could read my handwriting. It didn't matter as neither was marked on our map. Someone suggested that we would have done better had we taken the map from the in-flight magazine.

We didn't appreciate the extent of our incompetence until we reached Surkhet, a small town at the end of the road and the start of the two-day (or was that

to be most helpful. In between commenting on the size of Dave's biceps, observing that Rob looked like Rambo and enquiring whether we wanted sex (we couldn't work out whether they were offering themselves or were a couple of pimps), they provided us with the information we needed. At the same time they helped us to organize four porters to carry our kayaks.

The next morning we were off. There were three days of walking, one of which was unexpectedly through snow, before a river came into view—a blue ribbon meandering through seemingly endless ranges of forested mountains. The snow-capped peaks were now in the distance. The river looked magnificent and it had rapids. We didn't care whether we were in the right place or not.

At first these rapids just playfully teased us. We were in control and it was our turn to toy with them and not the reverse. Then, on the third day, the Karnali really started to put on steam. The gradient increased, the rapids grew in size, length and seriousness. This was what we had been waiting for; the bottom of the rapid was out of sight! The river tempted us with a possible line down to the next eddy. In between lay a maelstrom of green and white water. Beyond that lay the unknown. The rapid drew us in...

Dave was a few kayak lengths in front, he disappeared, consumed by a breaking wave. He crested out on a gigantic wave only to disappear again into the next trough. The Karnali was making us battle to reach the next eddy. Chaotic boils, irregular waves and finally an eddy line fortified by a preceding breaking wave. Full speed was required to punch through and reach the eddy on the other side.

The four of us sat in that small haven, safe from nature's fury. Excited grins from ear to ear, pouring out superlatives about the rapids, the Karnali and all the rivers of Nepal.

The lead changed. My turn to find a path across the next set of rapids, then Damien, then Rob. Adrenalin blurred the rapids into a single, hazy image of waves, ferocious hydraulics, exhilarated 'yehoos' and great expanses of green and white water. The rapids dominated and distracted from the relatively silent rain forest, unfortunately a mere afterthought.

Towards the end of the third day of kayaking the succession of rapids became slower. The valley became less claustrophobic. This was the end. All that remained was one long day of flat water and a final 26-hour 'to hell and back' bus journey returning us to where we'd started. Six weeks of stunning white-water kayaking were over. ■

After falling in with a bad crowd and before realizing that he was addicted, Theodore Kosari was making forays into such dishonourable pursuits (or so his mother keeps telling him) as wanton telemarking, rockclimbing, mountaineering, travelling, ski touring and white-water kayaking.

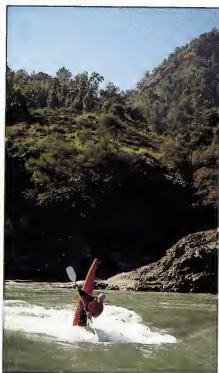


'Nobody told us about snow on the way to the Karnali River.' Right, looping on the Sun Kosi.

The chase was on! From village to village the mob would grow. Throughout all this, Rob could not understand a word. His Nepalese extends to a few civil greetings, a few not so civil greetings (we saved these for the Seti River when we were unexpectedly pelted with stones) and 'Dinoos char chia'. (Give me four cups of tea.) Rob's posse had grown to around 80 pint-sized deputies by the time they reached the thief's house. A few went around the back, the rest crowded around the front for the show-down with the child who had stolen our gear and with his parents. Needless to say, our knife and glasses were returned.

Pleased with our descent of the Marsyandi, satisfied that justice had been done, we set out on our penultimate 'to hell and back' bus trip, this time to western Nepal and the Karnali River.

The stories we had heard about the Karnali were intriguing and made it sound like an experience not to be missed. According to geographers, it is



three-day?) trek to the Karnali. But to which place should we trek? What route should we take? Which villages should we pass through? We all looked at each other, dumbfounded. Hmmm! Could we tell the porters to carry our kayaks to that section of grade-four and grade-five rapids on the Karnali that everyone raves about? We feared that some sort of white-water dementia had set in.

A two-hour fruitless search for a map combined with the 16-hour sleepless bus trip and no one we talked to had heard of either the Lahan or Lahore Khola—our dementia turned into desperation. Enough was enough! It was time to chill out, have a beer, watch Nepalese life pass by and figure out what to do next. We sat on a bridge in the main street contemplating our situation. It didn't take long for an inquisitive crowd to gather. A few spoke some English and they turned out

# REMARKABLE!

David Jones explores South Australia's southern Flinders Ranges

**M**t Remarkable was named in June 1840 by Edward John Eyre, 'this from the lofty way in which it towered above the surrounding hills, I named Mt Remarkable'.

The area has one of the largest remaining stands of native vegetation in the southern Flinders Ranges. Vegetation includes a diversity of native flowers (40 species of orchids) as well as native pines and river red gums along the creeks. The two main peaks are Mt Remarkable and Mt Cavern (770 metres). The height of Mt Remarkable is 960 metres according to maps and the National Parks & Wildlife Service brochures, but is signposted as 995 metres at its base and summit.

#### When to visit

South Australia and the Flinders Ranges are typically much drier than the more popular walking areas of the eastern States. When this walk was undertaken, unusually heavy September rains had resulted in severe flooding in the mid-north of South Australia. Local picnickers commented that they had not seen as much water in Mambray Creek for many years.

#### Maps

The park is on two 1:50 000 Department of Lands topographic maps, *Melrose* and *Wilmington*. The walk described is only on *Melrose*. Brief walk suggestions, park maps including the new boundaries, and rules are available in several NPWS brochures.

#### Access

Mt Remarkable National Park is made up of two sections, two kilometres apart, and has three main access points. The southern end is reached from Highway 1, turning off 45 kilometres north of Port Pirie. The northern end is reached by Wilmington on the Main North Road. The separate Mt Remarkable section has foot access from tracks near Melrose, including the Heysen Trail.

#### Facilities

The only visitor facilities are at Mambray Creek and Alligator Gorge. Mambray Creek has a popular campsite for tents and caravans, with toilets, showers and mains water for \$6.00 a night. Eight bush-camping sites are within the park for \$3.00 a night, and camping is allowed in some other areas by arrangement. Strict fire and camping restrictions apply from 1 November to 30 April. Bookings are essential for Easter and Labour Day weekends.

#### The walk

The walk described can be completed in two days by faster walkers in better weather. The walk starts at the Mambray Creek day-visitor car-park. Proceed east along the vehicle track, fording the creek or using the log upstream.

Within 300 metres a track to the left is signposted to Hidden Gorge by the Bluff (350 metres). Follow this track steeply upwards,



The author testing the water, carefully, at Alligator Creek, southern Flinders Ranges, South Australia. David Kingston

taking advantage of excellent views of Spencer Gulf, Mt Cavern and the Black Range as an excuse to stop frequently. Vegetation thickens near the summit where the track turns suddenly north-west, descending 50 metres before gradually rising along the Battery ridge. Again good views are obtained, with regeneration hiding the scars of logging, grazing and bushfires.

The track climbs the ridge for 2.5 kilometres, skirting the top of small, rocky clifftops. The Battery Track (four-wheel-drive) is reached and followed for a further one kilometre north past a small tower. Glimpses of Hidden Gorge are an incentive to continue. The turn-off to the gorge is signposted to the right, as is a look-out to the left.

Follow the Hidden Gorge track downwards across a small, wooded saddle and then north across the steep sides of a small, heavily wooded valley. Within one kilometre, the track turns east at the creek into Hidden Gorge.

The track descends beside the creek. We covered over 80 creek crossings within the gorge. Hidden Gorge has huge red quartzite cliffs which dwarf the walker and are only metres apart in places. Two obstacles block a walker's descent—a low cliff which must be climbed, leading to a steep, slippery rock-face

which can be walked down, and a small waterfall with huge blocks of rock and a fallen tree at the top. The easier route down is against the southern cliff, with stepping-stones round the pool edge.

After heavy rain, the water-covered path and close wet bushes resulted in a soaking up to the waist.

Continue down the gorge until Alligator Creek is reached. Turn left at the signposted T-junction, reaching Hidden Camp within 50 metres. Proceed through the campsite along the vehicle track, across the creek. If it is flooded, it can be forded downstream at several wide, shallow points.

The track crosses Alligator Creek four more times, each has its own difficulties when flooded. The track then heads to higher slopes for two kilometres and is extremely muddy and slippery when wet. We stopped at Kingfisher Flat to camp for the night although we had at least two hours of walking-time left which we used to light a fire and get into dry clothes.

**Day 2.** Our original intention had been to continue to follow the track north to Blue Gum Flat and Alligator Gorge, and then return through Kingfisher Flat to camp at Hidden Camp (camp fires banned). However, heavy rain in the early morning led us to suspect that the creeks would continue to rise, so we decided to return to Mambray Creek as we had planned to do on day three. The day turned out to be beautiful and sunny!

# the ALPHA BOOT

ALPHA I



## Anatomically Padded Tongue.

This generously padded Nylon Cordura® tongue is rolled-stitched with anatomically designed protection over the instep for a comfortable forward flex.

## Double Rivet Hardware

Rugged double rivet hooks and D-Ring lacing system anchor lacing at stress points.

## Bellows Closure

Comfortable bellows closure keeps out dirt and trail debris.

## D-Ring Lacing System

Convenient D-Ring lacing system allows quick-on, quick-off ability

## Double-Stitching

Durable Nylon double-stitching reinforces stress points

## Soft Brushed Nylon Lining

Entire boot is lined with soft, comfortable, woven brushed Nylon material. Absorbs moisture from the foot and dries out quickly.

## Durable, Breathable Nylon Cordura®

This durable, flexible woven Nylon Cordura® is flexible and breathable for all-day comfort and protection.

## Scooped Collar

Special design fits comfortably around achilles. Will not bite or bind with forward flex.

## Soft, Padded Collar

Padded collar fits comfortably around ankle and leg.

## Soft Foam Padding

Foam padding for comfortable protection from outside bumps and bruises.

## Reinforced Ankle Support

Anatomically designed ankle strap integrates with the double-stitching system to hold the boot naturally against the ankle. Premium split leather protects and supports the ankle.

## Reinforced Leather Backstay

Rough-out leather backstay reinforces ankle, flexes with forward motion.

## Premium Split Leather

Lightweight, durable and flexible leather breathes naturally to ventilate the foot and protect against bumps and bruises.

## Pre-Shaped Heel Counter

Expanding heel counter fits comfortably around heel to maintain foot position and protect the foot.

## VASQUE® Motion Control Device

Solid MCD fits completely around heel counter for protection and walking stability.

## Exclusive VASQUE® V.F.S.® Variable Fit System™

This comfortable Vasque® V.F.S. Variable Fit System allows you to adjust each footbed for an individually contoured comfortable fit in the different widths. Dual Density E.V.A. footbed absorbs shock. Contoured heel cup positions the foot in proper fit. "Sportee" covering absorbs moisture, dries quickly.

## Steel Shank Support

Long lasting tempered steel shank gives added strength to wedge shaped midsole support.

## Cushion Impact Midsole

Strong, long-wearing Vasque® EVA midsole is lightweight and absorbs shock on heel strike and forward roll.

## Exclusive Alpha-Flex® Insole

Firm, resilient padded insert functions as an integrated biomechanical flex-pad for a naturally flexible forward stride.

## Perforated "Air-Flow" Vents

These "Air-Flow" vents up front pump air throughout the boot as you walk, keeping feet feeling dry all day

## Soft Rubber Landing Pads

Bio-mechanically shaped and positioned landing pads on bottom of footbed absorbs shock during forward motion.

## Vasque® Ribbed Bumper-Lug Outsole.

Vasque's exclusive outsole features a self-cleaning lug wearing, self-cleaning lug sole for sure-footed traction. Reinforced ribbed toe bumper for protection.





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## WILD SPRING 1993 71



## TO A ROSSI TREKKER, IT'S JUST ANOTHER BUMP IN THE ROAD.



The thought of attempting to conquer Cradle Mountain is enough to set any bushwalker quaking in their boots. Unless, of course, those boots are a pair of Rossi Trekkers.

That's because the Trekker is designed and manufactured in Australia, specifically for Australian bushwalking conditions.

Inside and out, the Rossi Trekker is an extremely hardwearing boot that combines highly innovative design with four generations of boot making experience to offer you the very best in both comfort and quality.

The exterior of the boots feature full leather uppers, the main body of which is constructed from a single piece of leather. This means they are not only easy to waterproof, they're also easier to keep free from heavy mud deposits. Built-in padded ankle supports and cushions ensure that the Trekker is easy to wear, too.



The Trekker is fully lined with both leather and cambrelle, offering superior comfort and a snug fit, and the internal lining keeps your feet cool when it's hot, and warm when it's not. The very popular resin rubber "Rossi Lite" sole features air cushioning to absorb impact, from heel to ball joint, and the moulded polyurethane midsole wedge gives you added comfort and support all day long. The superior tread design offers you a grip strong enough to handle the toughest conditions.

Although heavy on features, the Rossi Trekker is actually a very light boot, so you're not carrying around any excess weight. And it's light on your pocket too, compared to many imported brands.

If you're after a bushwalking boot that can take the most hostile terrain in its stride, try a pair of Rossi Trekkers on for size.

**Rossi Boots**  
in Australia  
WORK HARD - PLAY HARD

# BUSHWALKING BOOTS

Bringing 'em to heel, by John Chapman

**B**oots are probably the most important equipment item for any bushwalker yet they are discussed least. Tents, packs, sleeping-bags and rainwear are all thoroughly dissected around campsites while the humble boot is generally ignored. Yet a quiet revolution in boot construction has taken place.

The traditional boot was once made with a solid leather upper which was stitched externally to the sole. This style of construction was kept simple with no padding and no linings. As there were relatively few models available, breaking in new boots sometimes required desperate shape modifications of both feet and boots by many methods. This process did not guarantee a reasonable fit and sometimes even resulted in destroying the new boots! Older walkers will be able to relate plenty of new-boot horror stories. This style of boot is still available and performs perfectly provided it fits!

Boots began to change during the 1970s when imported boots from Europe gained acceptance in Australia in spite of the high price. Innovations such as paddings and leather linings improved comfort and came to be accepted as desirable features in any boots although adding to their cost. Local manufacturers initially seemed reluctant to adopt these improvements.

The biggest revolution in boot design occurred during the 1980s when bootmakers combined stitching with moulded soles to create the modern boot. Moulded soles had been around for a long time in runners and dress shoes but simply were not strong enough to stand up to the stresses of bushwalking. Basically, the new method involved stitching the boot to the sole using internal stitching, then casting a moulded sole to cover the leather to the sole junction.

This did not make boots any stronger but certainly reduced water leaks through the heavy stitching which is used to join the upper to the sole. Another advantage is that the sole does not protrude out of the side, making it easier to stand on the edge of things, as when crossing steep slopes, or on rocks.

However, it is interesting to note that most of the very solid boots available at present which are designed to stand up to extremely heavy use are still externally stitched. Obviously the manufacturers are not confident that moulding will survive extreme abuse, such as when heavy loads are carried in very rough terrain. Many of the boots in this range are suitable for light mountaineering where crampons may be used occasionally.

Moulding soles to boots requires specialized equipment as well as experience. Initially local manufacturers were very slow to adopt the new methods. Bunyip was the first to use the new technology on boots and after some



'Fit and the latest style are the most important considerations.' Matt Darby

teething problems is now producing good, reliable, moulded-sole boots. It has even managed to export boots. Others are now starting to produce moulded-sole models which compare favourably with imported products.

A more recent revolution in design has occurred as a result of runner technology being applied to walking-boots. Instead of using only one or a small number of heavy leather pieces to construct a boot, a large number of very light pieces is employed. Light materials such as suede and Cordura are extensively used. Strength and firmness are obtained from a combination of stitch-lines and material layers to produce a very light yet reasonably serviceable boot. Flexibility can also be designed into specified areas of the boot, improving comfort.

Of course with many pieces and the resulting stitch-holes, they are not very good at keeping water out. In most light models the water problem is overcome by the manufacturer's recognition that they will leak readily and a design to ensure that the boot will dry fairly quickly. Using non-absorbent synthetic liners and uppers reduces water-retention as well. For some uses, such as tropical environments where sweating is a problem, these boots are actually better.

## Which style to choose?

Opinions vary greatly as to what is the best style for each purpose. Some people use very light footwear for the heaviest walking and have no problems while others use solid boots in the same situation—the choice is up to the

individual. Here I will give some guidelines which suit the majority of walkers.

**Lightweight models.** For day walking and overnight walking on constructed tracks such as Wilsons Promontory, Royal National Park and Lamington, the lightest boots should be very suitable. Runners can often be used but they give little ankle support, which is one of the advantages of boots. Most lightweight models are constructed from unlined leather with minimal padding or from multiple pieces of lightweight leather, suede and/or Cordura. Leather is definitely more waterproof but often that is unimportant when using lightweight footwear. Most synthetics do breathe more and perform better in sweaty environments like the tropics.

Boots will not prevent a twisted ankle but they do provide some support; the heavier the boot, the better the support. This support will mean that the ankle will become less tired, and hence improve enjoyment. As a side benefit, a less tired ankle can help to reduce the severity of injury if you do fall over. Also, even very light boots have a reasonable tread pattern which grips better than runners that have been designed for playing sport, not for bush tracks. Another new product to appear extensively in the shops are walking shoes. These are also suitable for light use but they do not protect the ankle. Like runners, they are not suitable where there is deep mud; it is all too easy for one to be pulled off in a mud-hole, a common problem in Tasmania.

**Medium-weight models.** For walking with a heavier pack on dry bushwalking tracks or for rough day walks, medium-weight boots are recommended. These are often constructed from a single piece of leather and

**R**IDGE RUNNING over treacherous granite rubble high in the Engadine Alps, trekking down to Dusky Sound in a Fiordland monsoon, crossing moraine on the way down to Langtang Valley from Ganja La — our footwear has been to some of the wettest, roughest and most spectacular terrains there are.

## CLASSIC KATHMANDU TREKS



### RANDONNEE

Constructed from a single-piece leather upper bonded to a Traction sole. The upper is Blake stitched to the midsole. The sole and nylon midsole provide excellent "stiffness" for stability and traction on steep and rugged terrain. A padded Cambrelle lining protects against abrasion. The leather is superb and the boots are extremely comfortable, giving snip support all the way up your foot. Made in Italy.



### TRAIL

Not many boots are still made to this standard of ruggedness. The Trail is a survivor, a single-piece leather boot with an upper fully stitched down to a deep-lugged Vibram block sole. A steel shank makes the boots firmly supportive. The boot is leather lined for outstanding durability. Made in Italy.



### KATHMANDU WALKERS

The original hand-lasted, Italian-made, stitched, fine leather walking shoes that we've stocked for the last ten years. These shoes are made to the same rugged design as our hiking boots. The sole is a solid Vibram Montagna block with deep-etched treads and good height. The leather is stronger than you'll find on virtually any other shoe on the market. For rugged travel or tough working wear.

Kathmandu Footwear	Recommended Use	Price
KATHMANDU WALKERS	rugged outdoor work or travel wear	(36-47) \$199.00 (48-50) \$219.00
MOUNTAIN CROSS	established trails, dry climates	\$129.50
BACK COUNTRY	dry climate, travel, general outdoor wear	\$139.00
TRAILITE	non alpine & 3 season hiking, established tracks	\$169.50
RANDONNEE	4 season, established tracks	\$189.50
RANDONNEE SYMPATEX	4 season, established tracks, including light snow or wet conditions	\$209.50
TRAIL	4 season, alpine, snow & wet or extreme rugged conditions	(36-47) \$219.00 (48-50) \$239.00
MOUNTAINEER	4 season, rugged alpine, snow/ice, basic mountaineering	\$289.50



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SYDNEY, Town Hall Arcade, cnr Kent & Bathurst Sts, Ph (02) 261 8901

BRISBANE, 144 Wickham St, Fortitude Valley, Ph (07) 252 8054

provide a fair degree of foot support as they have a firm shank.

A shank is a piece of steel, plastic, wood, or similar material, which runs from the heel towards the ball of the foot inside the sole. This reduces bending in the sole under the arch, providing a firm support for the entire foot. If the shank is non-existent or too light, the boot and hence the foot bends in reverse under the arch. While our arch can survive this quite well, the muscles do get tired and hence become uncomfortable. In severe cases it is possible to strain the arch muscles and this can occur if you are using your feet in situations they are not used to. If you don't carry loads every day (most of us don't do manual labour regularly) or walk long distances on uneven ground, it is easy to strain the arch when bushwalking. Firm boots with properly designed shanks will prevent this. Boots in this range are suitable for most walking and are quite popular.

**Heavy boots.** If you intend to punish your footwear or need a firm platform to stand on, consider the heavy-boot range. If carrying packs for several weeks or for crossing steep, slippery slopes, the solid construction will be of considerable benefit. If you have ever climbed or traversed an icy slope or an extremely unstable, wet, dirt slope, you will know what I mean. You may make it across with lighter boots but those with a solid foot-support are able to cross with confidence. Of course, most of the time the attributes of heavy boots are not needed and many walkers make do with medium-weight footwear and are careful in dicey places. Heavy boots can also be used with crampons for short periods when necessary.

### How to fit

This was described well by Phil Carter in the last boot survey (*Wild* no 38). The prime requirement is that boots must fit well and should be reasonably comfortable. Toes should never touch the front under general use and the heel should be firmly held into the heel-socket. Fit is most important in the heavier models as there is less give for them to be moulded to the shape of your foot. Fit alone is the reason why so many people use light- or medium-weight boots which mould to your foot fairly easily.

If possible, it is a good idea to simulate the conditions in which you intend to use the boots. If you climb lots of hills, for example, test them by climbing some stairs. It will help to reveal whether that heel is slipping excessively. Also, when coming down the stairs allow the boots to point downhill by hanging off the edge of the steps. The test is whether your large toes are hitting the front. Most other problems are similar to buying any footwear. Skilled shop assistants can help by suggesting appropriate models to suit the shape of your foot and by asking the right questions. They should know the problems with fit of each make and ask leading questions as to how they feel. If assistants tell you things such as 'they look good' or 'they fit well', you should ignore their advice as it's not their foot that's inside the boot.

Most shops will allow customers a refund on boots provided they are returned in new condition. While this only allows you to wear



the boots on the carpet at home, at least they can be left on for hours. This will not reveal all potential problems but is better than a ten-minute test in the shop. It is worth remembering though that with even the best fit you will inevitably have a blister or two and it is sometimes a relief to take boots off. No single boot is perfect in every weather and terrain.

#### Where to buy

First, wherever you purchase your boots I encourage you at least to try locally made boots first. The quality of the better makes is

reasonable stock of sizes and these costs are comparable to those of any shop. You can benefit in that seconds are at times available but remember that there is often no guarantee with faulty goods.

#### Custom orders

The real benefit of using local manufacturers and dealing direct with the factory comes for those who have a great deal of trouble getting footwear to fit. Perhaps your feet have an abnormal shape or you need either a tiny or a huge size. Most manufacturers will make

describe them as keeping water out or being water-repellent, not waterproof. The best material for keeping water out is a single piece of leather. While leather is not all that waterproof, it forms an excellent material for absorbing water-repellent compounds. The lighter the leather, the less the quantity of compound it can hold—and hence the less effective it will be at repelling water.

Synthetics such as Cordura and nylon work by having a waterproof backing and as this wears, it lets water through. Synthetics usually leak water from the start as water percolates through the stitch-holes. Other materials sometimes used as liners to repel water are Gore-Tex and similar, competitive products. These materials are of limited benefit as they are fairly fragile. While they may work when new, holes will inevitably develop as the boot wears. Of course this wear is not visible as the Gore-Tex is hidden but if you examine some well-worn boots and see how a foot can wear holes through relatively tough materials like leather linings, you will realize that these thin, watertight shells will readily wear out well before the boot does.

All boots will let in water if you are in a wet environment for extended periods. As we all know, water can get in through holes and while moulded soles have reduced the number of large stitch-holes, they still haven't sealed the biggest hole of all which is where most of the water seems to get in—the hole in the top where your leg enters. With leather boots you can walk through wet grass and have damp feet after several hours, but wade through one creek and you will soon realize that in comparison your feet were not really wet before! It is likely that most of the dampness was from sweating and condensation.

So why do so many walkers go to so much trouble to keep their boots water-resistant? Well, there is one area where boots that repel water are almost essential. In snow and very cold weather water-repellency is very important. It will not stop your feet from ultimately getting at least a little bit wet but will stop the water inside from changing very often, and thus allow what water is in there to become warm. The leaky lightweight boots and runners are not very suitable for cold, wet environments.

Of course there are situations where water-repellency is actually undesirable. The hot, humid climates of northern Australia encourage sweating and it is quite pleasant to get your feet wet. Boots that let the water run out quickly and breathe are superior to all-leather boots in these areas.

Since the last boot survey the number of brands and models has exploded and it is now no longer possible to visit two or three shops and see every model. Most shops only stock a few brands, with about ten models being the norm. For most walkers a good fit will be obtained from the range at their local shops. If you are having problems, it is worth visiting shops in other areas as they all have different brands and models.

#### The table

As it is really not possible to select boots from a table, the survey information is intended to give you a guide as to which models may be suitable for your use and the approximate



'Look carefully before you buy.' Tim Devlin

equal to any of the imports and we all know plenty of good reasons to support Australian manufacturers. Another good reason is the after-sales support such as replacing soles which have worn out.

The best advice will usually be obtained from the specialist bushwalking shops. Some people still consider them to be expensive but in today's very competitive market they are not. You benefit from the staff who have both personal experience with boots and often considerable knowledge of the footwear they sell. The range from which to select is extensive because they stock boots from the dearest down to the middle prices. As well, most specialist shops do not sell unreliable boots, which are often the cheapest.

Other popular places for buying boots are disposal, army-surplus and working-clothes stores. These shops tend to stock goods in the low-to-medium price categories. While some products are simply cheap and not very good, hidden on the crowded shelves are some boots that are good value. A reasonable amount of knowledge is needed by the customer (you) as most staff in these stores have either little or no bushwalking experience. There is a considerable difference between walking and other uses.

There is a third source of footwear which is slowly increasing in popularity. Buy direct from the manufacturer or importer. You may think this could be really cheap but prices are usually about the same as those in the shops as the company has to pay someone to serve and help you, maintain a display and keep a

specials to order and you must expect to pay extra, particularly for very large sizes which require more material and work to construct. It is definitely best to visit the factory or get the representative to draw out your foot shape. While it is possible to send a drawing through the post we all have a different idea of how to draw an outline of our foot.

If you are unable to visit the manufacturer, some of the bushwalking shops are willing to deal with the factory for you. Remember to be courteous to the staff from the factory or shop as specials are supplied as favours. They are handmade, and produce no profit for the manufacturer or the shop even with extra charges because of the additional work involved.

Custom orders for boots made overseas are also available from many factories although most shops are not keen to take orders. This is understandable as it can take from three to six months to obtain boots to order from overseas and there is no guarantee that they will fit. It is easier to order specials from local manufacturers.

Size ranges of imported boots have improved in recent years and it is now possible to obtain some models up to size 52 (huge!) off the shelf. Of course it is not worthwhile to make all models in all sizes but at least there is some choice for large feet now. The situation is better for small sizes as some children's models are available.

#### Waterproofness

There seems to be a myth that boots are truly waterproof. In my experience some are better than others at keeping water out; note that I



**SCARPA**

*nessun luogo è lontano...  
there is no place too far..*

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costs and weights. Some technical information such as whether boots have a steel, plastic or wooden shank were omitted from this survey as I found it to be misleading. Some steel shanks are very soft while some plastic ones are extremely stiff and there was no real correlation between stiffness and the material used. Unfortunately we have not yet devised a non-destructive and reliable test to measure the shank's stiffness. The shank design has influenced the category into which I have placed the boot.

All the weights and heights are given for a size 41 (or 7 1/2) except for the two children's

models. Most boots are now moulded and the majority are stitched internally as well—which is called Blake stitching.

Wherever 'Cordura' is described it means a heavy, coarse-weave nylon which has several trade names. It always has a semi-waterproof backing but boots made with it can be assumed to let water in easily. As for the gusset, any gusset above two-thirds height is adequate. Full gussets do keep water out better but the folded material around the top of the boot can often cause problems. Boots with two-thirds and three-quarters gussets keep water out effectively and are rarely a

problem with fit. If trying on a full-gusset boot, test whether the folded material is biting into your ankle or pinching on downhill.

I'll conclude with this observation: There has never been a better time to buy boots. Not only are many, many brands available with different lasts (foot shape) but bootmakers have improved both quality and variety of styles. If you choose carefully, there is now no real excuse for using poorly fitting or inappropriate footwear! ■

John Chapman (see contributors in *Wild* no 1) is one of Australia's most travelled and widely respected bushwalkers and bushwalking writers.

## Wild Gear Survey Bushwalking boots

	Use	Weight, kilograms, pair size 7½/41	Height, centimetres, size 7½/41	Sole construction	Outer pieces, material(s)	Lining type	Tongue/lacing	Size range	Comments	Approx price, \$
<b>Aku Italy</b>										
Osai	Light/medium	120	16	Moulded	4+, suede/Cordura	Cambrelle	½ gusset, D-rings, hooks	37-47		170
Canaszi	Medium	115	16	Moulded	1, leather	Cambrelle	Full gusset, D-rings, hooks	39-47		220
Shap	Light/medium	120	16.5	Moulded	4, leather/Cordura	Gore-Tex	As above	36-48		270
Box	Heavy	165	17	Moulded	1, leather	Gore-Tex	As above	39-47		300
<b>Arkos Italy</b>										
Discovery	Light	90	13	Moulded	5+, leather/Cordura	Cambrelle	No gusset, D-rings, eyelets	6-12		150
Arakaleno	Light/medium	120	13.5	Moulded	5+, Cordura/suede	Cambrelle	Full gusset, D-rings, hooks	4-12	Optional Gore-Tex model available	160
Cortina	Medium	135	15.5	Moulded	1, leather	Leather	¾ gusset, D-rings, hooks	3-12	Optional narrow fit available	240
<b>Aeola New Zealand</b>										
Honaki	Medium	130	17.5	Moulded	1, leather	Cambrelle	Full gusset, D-rings, hooks	4-12		170
<b>Burnip Australia</b>										
Razoback	Medium	120	13	Moulded	8+, leather	Leather	Full gusset, D-rings, hooks	36-45		200
Bogong	Heavy	170	18	Moulded	1, leather	Leather	As above	36-48		240
Finders	Heavy	175	18	Externally stitched	1, leather	Leather	As above	40-48		270
<b>Caribee China</b>										
Kakadu	Light	90	15	Moulded	7+, suede/nylon	Cambrelle	½ gusset, eyelets, hooks	4-12		60
Northwest Territory	Light	100	15	Moulded	7+, suede/Cordura	Cambrelle	No gusset, D-rings, hooks	5-12		70
Triappa	Light	100	13	Moulded	8+, suede/Cordura	Cambrelle	½ gusset, eyelets	5-12		80
Red River	Light/medium	100	12.5	Moulded	8+, suede	Cambrelle	½ gusset, eyelets, hooks	5-12		90
<b>Dechoten Austria</b>										
Summerring	Medium	130	16	Externally stitched	3, leather	Suede	Full gusset, D-rings, hooks	37-47		230
<b>Dr Martens Australia</b>										
Hiking Boot	Light/medium	125	17	Externally stitched	3, leather	None	½ gusset, eyelets	3-12		235
<b>Garment Italy</b>										
Sella	Light	110	16	Moulded	6+, suede/Cordura	Cambrelle	½ gusset, D-rings, hooks	37-46		150
Mesa	Light	120	16	Moulded	4+, leather/Cordura	Cambrelle	½ gusset, D-rings, hooks	37-46		190
Sarak	Medium	135	15	Moulded	1, leather	Leather, Cambrelle	¾ gusset, D-rings, hooks	37-47	Optional women's fit available	255
320	Medium	140	17	Moulded	1, leather	Cambrelle	As above	37-47		
<b>Harold Australia</b>										
Hiker	Light/medium	135	17.5	Externally stitched	3, leather	None	Full gusset, eyelets	3-12		115
Ranger	Light/medium	135	16	As above	3, leather	Leather (heel only)	½ gusset, eyelets, hooks	3-12		140
Mountaineer	Heavy	160	21	As above	4, leather	None	As above	4-12		160
<b>H-Tec Italy</b>										
Hi Double	Light	100	12	Moulded	7+, suede/Cordura	Cambrelle	No gusset, eyelets, hooks	3-12	Narrow fit available	100
Maura Kee	Light	100	13.5	Moulded	6+, suede/Cordura	Cambrelle	½ gusset, eyelets, hooks	3-12	As above	135
Rogue	Light	100	12.5	Moulded	4, suede	Cambrelle	As above	6-12		150
<b>Kathmandu Italy</b>										
Backcountry	Light	125	14	Moulded	4+, suede/Cordura	Cambrelle	Full gusset, D-rings, hooks	36-48		140
Traffic	Medium	135	16.5	Externally stitched	1, leather	Cambrelle	½ gusset, D-rings, hooks	36-50		170
Randonnee	Medium	130	17	Moulded	1, leather	Cambrelle	Full gusset, D-rings, hooks	36-50	Symplex model available	190
Trail	Heavy	190	18	Externally stitched	1, leather	Leather	As above	36-50		220
Mountaineer	Heavy	175	17	Moulded	1, leather	Leather	As above	36-50		290
<b>Kingbird Canada</b>										
Sore Copsehead	Medium	150	18.5	Moulded	3+, leather	Symplex	¾ gusset, D-rings, eyelets	7-12		280
<b>K Swiss China</b>										
Vivone	Light	90	12	Moulded	7+, leather	Cambrelle	No gusset, D-rings, hooks	6-10		140

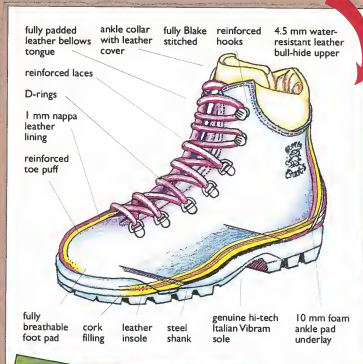


# Bunyip Boots

## THE NEW COMPLETE BUNYIP RANGE...

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Bogong



Razorback



Uluru

Flinders



Kosciusko

AUSTRALIAN OWNED



AUSTRALIAN MADE



Wild Gear Survey Bushwalking boots *continued*

Use	Weight kilograms, per size 7/9/41	Height, centimetres, size 7/9/41	Sole construction	Outer pieces, material(s)	Lining type	Tongue/lacing	Size range	Comments	Approx. price, \$
<b>La Sportiva Italy</b>									
Dakota	Light	110	14.5	Moulded	5+, suede/Cordura	Cambrelle	1/2 gusset, D-rings, hooks	35-47	215
Turist	Light/medium	125	15	Externally stitched	1, leather	Leather	3/4 gusset, D-rings, hooks	36-47	230
<b>Merrell Korea/Thailand</b>									
Sideloak	Light	0.45	10	Moulded	8+, suede/Cordura	Cambrelle	1/2 gusset, eyelets, nrgs, hooks	10 (child) -8 (adult)	100
Light Traveller	Light	0.90	11	Moulded	9+, Cordura	Cambrelle	1/2 gusset, D-rings, eyelets, hooks	7-14	125
Lazer	Medium	1.15	13	Moulded	6+, suede/Cordura	Cambrelle	1/2 gusset, D-rings, hooks	5-14	145
Timberline	Medium	1.15	15	Moulded	6+, suede/Cordura	Cambrelle	Full gusset, D-rings, hooks	7-15	170
Explorer WTC	Medium/heavy	1.40	16	Moulded	3, leather	Cambrelle	Full gusset, D-rings, hooks	5-15	240
<b>Mountain Leisure Products Indonesia</b>									
Adventure Pursuit	Light	0.90	15	Moulded	9+, suede/nylon	Cambrelle	1/2 gusset, D-rings, eyelets, hooks	3-12	80
<b>Nike Korea</b>									
Cordura-leather	Light	0.90	12.5	Moulded	8+, suede	Cambrelle	No gusset, eyelets	6-15	160
Air Vapour Mid	Light	1.00	14.5	Moulded	3+, suede	Cambrelle	1/2 gusset, eyelets	6-15	180
<b>Paraflex New Zealand</b>									
Koradix Hiker	Medium/heavy	1.70	17	Vulcanized	3, leather	Leather (heel only)	Full gusset, D-rings, eyelets	5-12	125
<b>Redback Australia</b>									
Heavy Hiker	Light/medium	1.50	20	Moulded	3, leather	Cambrelle	1/2 gusset, D-rings, hooks	4-12	125
<b>Reebok China</b>									
Buendige Mid	Medium	1.30	12.5	Moulded	9+, suede/nylon	Cambrelle	3/4 gusset, D-rings, eyelets, hooks	5-15	155
Trojan Hi	Light/medium	1.20	12.5	Moulded	12+, suede/nylon	Cambrelle	1/2 gusset, D-rings, eyelets	5-15	175
<b>Rockport Taiwan</b>									
Rugged Outdoors	Light	1.00	13	Moulded	6+, leather/suede	Cambrelle	1/2 gusset, eyelets, hooks	5-11	200
Indiana Gore Tex	Medium	1.25	14	Externally stitched	6+, leather	Cambrelle (no padding)	Full gusset, eyelets, hooks	7-15	400
<b>Rossil Australia</b>									
Scout	Light	1.20	15.5	Externally stitched	3, leather	None	1/2 gusset, eyelets	4-12	100
Tracker	Light/medium	1.25	16	Moulded	1, leather	Cambrelle	3/4 gusset, D-rings, hooks	4-12	100
Mulga	Light	1.25	15	Externally stitched	3, leather	None	3/4 gusset, eyelets	2-12	105
Bourke	Light	1.20	14	Moulded	6, leather	Cambrelle	1/2 gusset, D-rings, hooks	4-12	135
Falcon	Medium	1.40	15	Moulded	1, leather	Suede	As above	4-12	135
<b>Salomon France/Korea</b>									
Outdoor	Light	1.00	12.5	Moulded	7+, suede/Cordura	Cambrelle	No gusset, nrgs, eyelets	31/2-12	150
Authentic 7	Medium	1.40	16.5	Moulded	3, leather	Cambrelle	Full gusset, D-rings, hooks	31/2-12	280
<b>Scarpa Italy</b>									
Trek	Medium	1.30	14.5	Moulded	1, leather	Cambrelle	1/2 gusset, D-rings, hooks	36-47	240
Mirage	Medium	1.40	17	Moulded	1, leather	Cambrelle	As above	39-48	260
SL	Medium/heavy	1.50	18	Moulded	1, leather	Cambrelle	Full gusset, D-rings, hooks	36-47	290
Alp	Heavy	1.80	19	Moulded	1, leather	Cambrelle	As above	39-47	360
<b>Selle Italy</b>									
1031	Light	0.90	15	Moulded	10+, suede/Cordura	Cambrelle	1/2 gusset, D-rings, eyelets, hooks	35-46	140
1033	Light	1.00	14	Moulded	8+, suede/Cordura	Cambrelle	As above	35-46	155
1030	Light/medium	1.10	15	Moulded	5+, suede	Confortex	1/2 gusset, D-rings, hooks	35-46	200
<b>Silver China</b>									
Grampian	Light	1.10	14.5	Externally stitched	3, leather	Leather	Full gusset, eyelets	3-13	90
Everest	Light	1.15	15	As above	4, leather	Leather (no padding)	No gusset, eyelets	3-13	90
<b>Trezzetti Italy</b>									
Arctica	Medium	1.45	14.5	Moulded	1, leather	Cambrelle	1/2 gusset, D-rings, hooks	35-48	200
Piano	Heavy	1.55	15.5	Moulded	1, leather	Cambrelle	As above	39-48	250
<b>Vasque Korea/China/Italy</b>									
Kids Kimber	Light	0.80	11.5	Moulded	6+, suede/Cordura	Nylon	1/2 gusset, D-rings, eyelets	11 (child) -8 (adult)	100
Alpha I	Light	0.95	12.5	Moulded	7+, suede/Cordura	Nylon	1/2 gusset, D-rings, hooks	7-14	115
Claron II	Light	1.10	14.5	Moulded	9+, suede/Cordura	Nylon	1/2 gusset, D-rings, eyelets	5-15	150
Claron IV	Light	1.15	14.5	Moulded	1, leather	Nylon	Full gusset, D-rings, hooks	5-15	165
Sunbriker	Medium	1.30	14.5	Moulded	1, leather	Gore-Tex	As above	5-15	290
<b>Zamberlan Italy</b>									
Lady Lite	Light	1.20	15	Moulded	1, leather	Cambrelle/leather	Full gusset, D-rings, hooks	36-43	260
New Fall Lite	Light/medium	1.30	15	Moulded	1, leather	As above	As above	36-47	290
Trek Lite	Light/medium	1.30	15	Moulded	1, leather	As above	1/2 gusset, D-rings, hooks	36-48	340
Alpin Lite	Medium	1.40	15.5	Moulded	1, leather	Cambrelle	1/2 gusset, D-rings, hooks	35-48	390

# MERRELL

## The state of the art in sport sandals has moved to Merrell.

Visually and technologically different, Merrell's begin where the others leave off. The Merrell patented innovations take sandals to new levels of performance and comfort. And they have a fit and feel that are typically Merrell.



*Moulded Support Struts anchor the foot for support and control.*

### Closure systems for total control

Merrell's sandal technology effectively eliminates the slip and rock common to most sandals.

At the heel our sandals feature a Strap and Strut Assembly. This three-part system anchors, controls and supports the foot. It's built around our thermo-plastic Moulded Support Struts. In effect, they form an open-backed heel counter that provides a firm mooring for the foot.

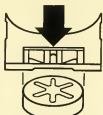
For fine tuning of fit, the straps of our Double Ankle Closure adjust independently behind the

heel and across the instep. To complete the system, our Cross-over Closure is a four-point wrap at the toes that eliminates annoying foot flop and wash-out.

Men's and women's feet differ anatomically. Merrell offers sandals that in profile and sizing truly – and separately – fit the feet of men and women.

### Merrell's Air-Cushion Mid-sole

Under the heel, the air-filled chamber of our Air Cushion Mid-sole compresses to dissipate impact and absorb shock that in each stride can be as high as four times the



*Merrell's patented Air-Cushion Mid-sole absorbs shock and stabilizes your foot.*

body's weight. When compressed, the Air Cushion creates a heel cup that works with our Strap and Strut Assembly to keep the heel centred and supported for improved fit and control.

### Merrell's Patented Fulcrum Mid-sole

Merrell's patented Fulcrum Mid-sole takes sandals to a new level of performance. Fulcrum technology builds in extra cushioning at the heel, increased stability in mid-stride and a propulsive, 'rolling effect' off the toes.



*Cushioning at the heel.*



*Stability in mid-stride.*



*Propulsive 'rolling effect' at toes.*

### Ground gripping control

#### Models Available

##### BAJA

Sizes Men 7-14 (full sizes)  
Women 5-10 (full sizes)  
Weight 550 g  
Colour Slate Blue/Purple

##### BELIZE

Sizes Men 7-14 (full sizes)  
Women 5-10 (full sizes)  
Weight 500 g  
Colour Cobalt/Deep Water

##### HATTERAS

Sizes Men 7-14 (full sizes)  
Women 5-10 (full sizes)  
Weight 400 g  
Colour Ultramarine/Purple

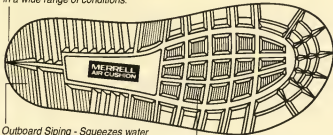
##### MONTEREY

Sizes Men 7-14 (full sizes)  
Women 5-10 (full sizes)  
Weight 400 g  
Colour Dark Spruce/Plum

*Merrell's Compression Moulded EVA Mid-sole offers added cushioning and control.*



*Control Sole – Grips without overload, in a wide range of conditions.*



*Outboard Siping - Squeezes water out for traction on wet surfaces.*

*Inboard Siping - Squeezes water out for traction on wet surfaces.*



# CROSS-CONCRETE SKIING

In-line skates and roller-skis—a *Wild* survey

What do you ski on when there's no snow? Concrete of course! The stuff's similar in colour, provides consistently good cover, is rarely wet or cold and is never far from home.

Over the past few years an ever-increasing band of enthusiasts can regularly be spotted in our city parks, supermarket car-parks and on bicycle tracks around the country. Some are on roller-skis, some on in-line skates. Some use ski stocks and some don't. Some are skating, some are striding and others are linking turns down steep hills. Some are seriously training for the forthcoming ski season while others are just out for a bit of fun.

In-line skates were originally developed as a training tool for ice-hockey players. Today their popularity is booming among cross-country skiers who seek to combine the smooth, fast skating action with the ability to link a series of turns on the way back down.

To a great extent, this increasing popularity is responsible for the large number of brand names currently flooding the market. A survey of this nature cannot attempt to cover them all so I have taken a representative sample of quality products that are widely available in specialist outlets around the country.

Many people refer to in-line skates as 'rollerblades'. This is technically incorrect as 'Rollerblade' is the registered name of one of the world's largest in-line skate manufacturers.

In-line skates consist of a stiff boot with a series of wheels attached to the base. Most have a rubber stopper attached to one of the skates and while this will help to slow you to some extent, it cannot be relied upon to bring you to a grinding halt, especially when travelling fast.

In-line skates are specifically designed for skating and, when used correctly, can provide excellent cross-country ski training. They have the advantage that they can be used on both concrete and bitumen although, when using ski stocks, concrete does not provide sufficient purchase for the stock tips. Another thing to be aware of is that beginners tend to lift the whole foot off the ground, instead of pulling upwards from the toes. This practice can translate into bad technique when on snow.

In-line skates excel in their ability to perform almost perfect carved turns, particularly parallel turns. You need to angulate correctly and up- or down-weight in the same way as on skis. Heated debate exists in relation to Telemarking—whether or not the technique used on in-line skates is technically correct and whether or not it is then transferable to snow. Try it for yourself. The

## Wild Equipment Survey In-line skates and roller-skis

### In-line skates

	Boot construction	Wheels	Wheel diameter, millimetres	Closure system	Intended use	Comments	Approx. price, \$
<b>Bauer Italy/Canada</b>							
XE 4	Moulded plastic, hinged cuff	4	72	3 buckles	Entry/intermediate level	Also XC SL model to suit women's foot	249
XF 4	As above	4	72	1 buckle and lace	Intermediate/advanced level		329
XT 7	As above	4	72	1 buckle and lace	Long distance touring		350
<b>Bracelet/Tower Micro</b>	Moulded polyurethane, hinged cuff	4	60	1 buckle and lace	Children/youth	Stoppers on both boots	90
Riero	As above	4	70	1 buckle and lace	Entry/intermediate level		150
Niro	As above	4	70	3 buckles	Cross-training		220
<b>Report Italy</b>							
Beweg	Moulded plastic, hinged cuff	4	76	Lace	Entry level		239
Club	As above	4	76	2 buckles	Intermediate/advanced level		279
Master	As above	4	76	3 buckles	Intermediate/advanced level	Quick release system for changing wheels and rocker	340
<b>Races Italy</b>							
Munch	Moulded plastic, hinged cuff	4	72	1 buckle and lace	Entry/intermediate level		199
Los Angeles	As above	4	72	1 buckle and lace	Intermediate/advanced level		299
Paris	As above	4	80	1 buckle and lace	Racing		499
<b>Rollerblade USA</b>							
Lightning	Moulded plastic, hinged cuff	4	70	1 buckle and lace	Entry/intermediate level		250
Machblade Equipe	As above	4	76	3 buckles	Intermediate/advanced level	Inner boot available in narrow width to suit women	399
Problade	Leather upper, one piece	5	80	Lace	Racing		750

### Roller-skis

	Frame length (overall), millimetres	Wheels	Wheel diameter, millimetres	Wheel width, millimetres	Braking mechanism	Weight (pair), kilograms	Intended use	Comments	Approx. price, \$
<b>Swe-Ski Sweden</b>									
Classic	780	2	75	60	Reverse brake on back wheel	2.45	Entry/intermediate/advanced level	Suits classic style skiing best	375
Skate 480	640	2	70	40	None	1.65	Intermediate/advanced level	Specifically for freestyle skiing	395
Team 610	770	2	70	40	Reverse brake on back wheel	1.90	As above	Special training tyres available for greater resistance	405
<b>V-Ski Australia*</b>									
Lite	440	2	70	24	None	1.50	Youth/under 40 kg		215
Mid	520	3	75	24	None	1.40	Entry/intermediate level		240
Standard	580	3	75	24	None	1.60	Entry/intermediate/advanced level	Ski training	260
V-S	580	3	75	24	None	1.40	Intermediate/advanced level	Roller-ski racing	320

\* Wheels and bearings imported

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### LITE-TREK



*Temperature Rating*	0c
Outside Test Temperature*	-3c
Inside Probe*	+24c
Total weight	1100g
Filling + weight	500g Quallolofil 7
Construction	Inner stitch free
Draft Tube & Tape Protector at zip	✓
Water Repellent, Breathable, 40 Denier Nylon	✓
Stuff Compression Type	✓
Size Extended	19 x 40 cms
Size Compressed	19 x 30 cms
Price	\$95

### TREK



*Temperature Rating*	-3c
Outside Test Temperature*	-6c
Inside Probe*	+27c
Total weight	1400g
Filling + weight	800g Quallolofil 7
Construction	Inner stitch free
Draft Tube & Tape Protector at zip	✓
Water Repellent, Breathable, 40 Denier Nylon	✓
Stuff Compression Type	✓
Size Extended	23 x 40 cms
Size Compressed	23 x 30 cms
Price	\$115

### SUPER TREK



*Temperature Rating*	-6c
Outside Test Temperature*	-10c
Inside Probe*	+27c
Total weight	1700g
Filling + weight	2 x 500g Quallolofil 7
Construction	Double wall
Draft Tube & Tape Protector at zip	✓
Water Repellent, Breathable, 40 Denier Nylon	✓
Stuff Compression Type	✓
Size Extended	27 x 40 cms
Size Compressed	27 x 30 cms
Price	\$135

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\*Temperature ratings are a guide only & vary from person to person & are affected dramatically by the weather conditions & types of shelter.



sensation's great and it's also an excellent way to stop in a hurry!

While in-line skates are relative newcomers to the cross-country ski training scene, roller-skis have been around for many years.

**Roller-skis** consist of a metal shaft with two or three wheels. A cross-country ski binding is attached to the shaft so that you are able to wear your normal ski boots. Some models have a braking device on the rear wheels which enables you to perform an efficient diagonal striding technique. Others are designed specifically for skating.

The two types surveyed differ significantly. The *Sued-Ski* has a longer shaft than the *V-Ski* and has one wheel at the front and one at the back. These wheels are wide, somewhat like roller-skate wheels. The *V-Ski* on the other hand has narrower wheels, similar to those on in-line skates. There are three of them for increased stability. The *V-Ski* also features an elastic instep cord to promote closer foot-to-ski contact and greater control.

Proponents of roller-skiing will argue that it is a more specific and beneficial form of ski training as it simulates cross-country skiing more precisely. Having a long shaft under each foot and using the same boot and binding system help to create this specific training effect. And the use of ski stocks means that you train the upper body as well.

On the down side (no pun intended), roller-skis don't turn as easily as in-line skates. Step turns or skate turns work best and, if all else fails, it's very easy to step out of the bindings and walk down that terrifying hill.

Whether you elect to go roller-skiing or in-line skating, there are some basic safety considerations. Concrete and bitumen are not as forgiving as even the hardest packed snow slope. Fortunately, there is an extensive range of protective gear on the market and, particularly when learning, it is advisable to wear knee pads, elbow pads and a helmet. Add wrist guards for in-line skating as compression fractures of the wrist are an all too common occurrence.

Skating on wet or greasy surfaces is very dangerous. Watch out for oil slicks in car-parks! Also, sand, small twigs and stones can easily upend you. If using ski stocks be especially careful of where you point the tips, particularly if there are cyclists around. Know what's at the bottom of any steep hill before descending. Above all, ski in control at all times, thus helping to ensure that the emerging trend to ban this sport (in some areas) is halted.

Monica Perryman

## CANOEES AND KAYAKS

### Ship-shape

Made in Canada, and sold only by mail-order in Australia, are two kayaks by *Folbot*, ideal for sea kayaking but suitable for other uses as well. As the name suggests, these are 'folding boats' that can be packed into bags for easy transportation. The *Greenlander II* is a double-seater which packs into two bags and weighs 28 kilograms. The *Alcut* is a single that can fit into either one or two bags and weighs only 17 kilograms. These kayaks feature aluminium frames, Hypalon hulls, Cordura decks and come with paddles. They cost \$3995

and \$2995, respectively, and can be ordered through *Folbot Australia* at PO Box 357, Gladesville, NSW 2111.

## SLEEPING-BAGS AND ACCESSORIES

### Freeze-tried

The new range of *Roman* sleeping-bags, the *Trek* series, have been filled with the latest in synthetic fibres, *Quallofil* 7. To prove the effectiveness of their product, *Roman* staff tested the *Trek* range in a freezer as cold as -10°C, and emerged 'as warm as toast'. (They even used a fan to create 40 kilometre an hour winds.) The *Lite-Trek* weighs only 1100 grams, has a fill weight of 500 grams and was tested to -3°C. The *Trek* weighs 1400 grams, has a fill weight of 800 grams and was



Roman Trek sleeping-bags. Right, Kathmandu Lotus rucksack.

tested to -6°C, while the *Super Trek* (the warmest of the three bags) was tested to -10°C. It contains 1000 grams of fill and its overall weight is 1700 grams. All the bags are rectangular in shape, water-repellent, insulated with a draught tube along the zip and surrounded by an inner and outer of 40 denier nylon. All bags come complete with their own compression sack. They cost \$95, \$112 and \$130, respectively.

## RUCKSACKS

### Ultra Cane Toad Escape

*Kathmandu's* new range of rucksacks was first mentioned in *Equipment* in *Wild* no 48 with the release of the *Talus*. All these new canvas packs (including the *Talus*) are made from the weatherproof and durable *Ultra* 12 pack canvas. The medium-sized *Escape* day pack has a hood closure and front pocket and costs \$79.50. The slightly larger *Cane Toad* features ice-tool loops, compression-straps, and a pocket in the lid which itself is closed by a zip. RRP \$99. The *Saddle Back* is the largest of the day packs at around 45 litres. It has a fixed back length, no internal frame and features padded shoulder-straps, a hip-belt, a zip pocket on the lid, compression-straps and a closed-cell-foam back for comfort. RRP \$109.50.

Containing the *Active* harness system is the alpine-style *Lotus* pack. The large, single compartment is reached through the top by a

lid (which has a pocket on the top and underneath). The *Llama* pack is very similar to the *Lotus* in most respects, except that it has an extra zip pocket on the front. The *Llama* also features the *Active* harness system. The *Lotus* and the *Llama* both feature compression-straps and sell for \$249.50 each. All *Kathmandu* rucksacks are available from *Kathmandu* shops.



### Wilderness Breakout

The *Breakout* is a new pack made and distributed by *Wilderness Equipment*. This group pack is designed for school students—situations in which the pack will be used often, and under tough conditions. The pack is made from eight-ounce corespun canvas which does not absorb much water and will not tear easily. The base of the large internal compartment is strengthened with tough 1000 denier Cordura and there is a large outside pocket. Two harnesses of different sizes are available to cater for different back lengths—essential in making the packs fit correctly. Designed for the 'school for hard knocks', a *Breakout* pack costs around \$250.

### Explorers sent packing

The *Strzelecki*, *McMillan* and *Wentworth* are all new canvas packs from Melbourne manufacturer *Aiking Equipment*. Each pack comes in two sizes for varying back lengths; the long-back length versions hold ten litres more than their smaller counterparts. The average volume of these packs is about 70 litres. All packs feature a lid pocket, dual-slide pocket zips, adjustable hip-fins, removable frames, angled compression-straps to stabilize packs when partially filled, and a Cordura-reinforced base and front to resist wear. The *Strzelecki* and *McMillan* also have adjustable shoulder- and chest-straps and cost \$389 and \$359, respectively. The *Wentworth* has slightly less volume than the others, but

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features one large single compartment and straps to carry an ice-axe or other accessories. RRP \$329. You don't have to be an explorer to find Aiking products—they are available in *Scout* and *Mountain Designs* shops.



She's come off the cover to show off the Kathmandu Canoe Top. **Top:** Aiking McMullan rucksack. **Near right:** JP Nominees Shortie jacket. **Far right:** Hi-Tec Whitewater sandal.

#### CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

##### Keeping on top

Kathmandu has recently brought out several new Polartec garments. The *Canoe Top* is made from Series 100 Polartec material and is like a T-shirt with a zipped neck and features a mesh pocket on the front and elasticized cuffs and hem. RRP \$ 69.50. The *Husky Jumper*, Hudson

*Bay Jacket* and *Arctic Fox* are all made from the thicker Series 200 Polartec material. The *Husky Jumper* is a pullover with a V-neck zip and elasticized cuffs and hem, but has no pockets. The *Hudson Bay Jacket* has a full-length zip and press-studs, and two front pockets. The *Arctic Fox* is a pullover with a half-length zip and two pockets on the front, a hood, and a waist draw-cord about 20 centimetres up from the hem. RRP \$99.50, \$139.50 and \$169.50, respectively.

Also from Kathmandu is the *Mountaineer boot*, a strong and robust boot made for heavy trekking or mountaineering conditions. It is constructed with a Vibram sole and leather body, and features a gusseted tongue. Crampons can also be fitted. The leather used is Hydrostop 12 which, it is claimed, is superior to most other leathers in being more waterproof or hydro-repellent. (They should certainly appeal to Tasmanian conservationists!) A pair of size 42 (about size 9) weighs 1.76 kilograms, and sells for \$289.50. All Kathmandu products can be bought from Kathmandu shops.



##### For boys in blue

Breathalon is an Australian-made fabric which is lightweight and waterproof yet is breathable and lets perspiration escape. JP Nominees, a Victorian-based company, is the sole agent for products made with Breathalon. The *Kosi jacket* was primarily designed for use by the police force in the uncomfortable, humid conditions of the Northern Territory. It features a full-length double-ended front zip, two front pockets (which can be reached from the inside by zips) and what initially appears to be a padded collar but is in fact a hood which, when removed from the collar, is attached to the garment with a touch-tape tab and can be tightened with a draw-cord. There is also an elastic inner cuff in each arm which helps to 'close' the sleeve, preventing any water, snow, or other nasties from encroaching too far. RRP \$147 (or \$199 when lined with brushed cotton). The *Shortie jacket* has similar features to the *Kosi* without the interior zip access to the pockets and has a different

appearance. RRP \$111 (or \$151 when lined with brushed cotton). Both the *Kosi* and *Shortie* come in a range of colours and sizes. Also available are *Breathalon overpants*. These have a basic design with a rear non-closing pocket and sell for \$50. At present, these products can only be ordered direct through JP Nominees on (03) 752 3336; allow one week for delivery.

##### Good-sport sandals

There are a number of players in the sport-sandals game. *Trek* adventure sandals are made in Israel by *Source*. The base of the sandal is made of wear-resistant rubber and on top there is scratched rubber which is claimed to reduce skidding and perspiration. In between these two layers is a shock-absorbing layer with air-cushion. There are three polypropylene straps, adjustable with touch-tape, to secure the foot. You have a choice of five different colours and patterns for the straps. A pair of size 43 (about size 9) weighs 450 grams, is sold in a special storage-bag, and sells for \$89.95. Distributed in Australia by *Nomad Travel Equipment*.



From *Hi-Tec* comes the new *Whitewater* adventure sandal, complete with three-way adjustable touch-tape strapping system. The sandal's outsole is made of high-friction carbon rubber and extra cushioning and shock-absorption at the heel and arch are provided by a phylon foot-bed. The sandals are available at several outdoor shops and sell for around \$75. They are distributed in Australia by *Hilanti Sports*.

*Merrell* has also got into the sport sandals act with the release of four sandals, the *Baja*, *Belize*, *Hatteras* and *Monterey*. These sandals have a three-part strap-and-strut assembly to anchor and support the foot at the heel, a strap or straps at the front of the foot, and are cushioned with neoprene and an air-cushion mid-sole. The mid-sole also matches the shape of the foot to minimize foot fatigue. As well, the shoes have a control sole to maximize grip in a wide range of conditions, and diamond tread pattern on the foot-bed to prevent the foot from slipping. *Merrell* sandals are distributed in Australia by *Ansoo*. The sandals sell for about \$65, \$75, \$85, and \$99, respectively, the increase in price indicating the superior features with each model. All sandals should be widely available in Australian outdoor shops by the time you read this item.

##### MISCELLANEOUS

##### On the spot

The *Pelican VersaLite* is claimed to be the world's brightest swivel-head pocket torch.

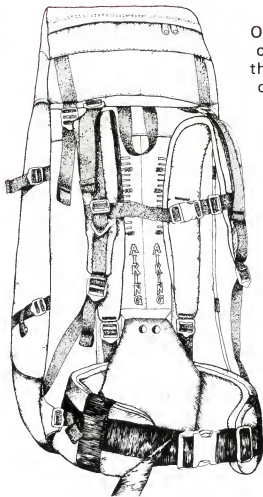
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The VersaLite is a multi-function torch which can be attached to many surfaces (such as a cap, wall or belt) with a clip, magnet or touch-tape. It shines with a Xenon spot-beam of 6000 candlepower, has an extra red lens so as not to attract insects, is water-resistant and lasts for up to seven hours on two AA Energizer batteries (included in package). It is made in the USA and distributed in Australia by *Outdoor Survival*. RRP \$39.95.



Pelican VersaLite torch.

#### Receiving you

Wild Ideas in *Wild* no 47 explained the use of the global positioning system in detail. A media release from *Panasonic* informed us of its *KC-G5500 GPS receiver*, a compact device measuring only 130 x 65 x 35 millimetres.

This pocket-sized receiver can store up to 99 locations and is powered by a rechargeable nickel hydride battery or an AA alkaline battery pack (included in the package). The receiver comes with a carry-case, battery-charger, AC adapter, adjustable mount and an external antenna. It can also be read in the dark! For information on its availability, contact *Panasonic Australia* in your capital city, or phone (02) 986 7400. RRP \$2000.

#### Fashion shades

Outdoor enthusiasts, particularly cross-country skiers, consider sun-glasses as an integral part of their personal outdoor equipment. Distributed by *GD Optical Supplies*, *Gargoyles sun-glasses* offer 100 per cent ultraviolet protection with a scratch-resistant lens—it is claimed that the patented lens has withstood the impact of a .177 calibre pellet (What about machine-gun bullets? travelling at over 400 kilometres an hour! Constructed of lightweight material throughout, a single pair weighs only around 30 grams. Choosing a pair is the hard part—you can select from the large number of colours, heavy or light tinting, coated or uncoated, mirrored or plain, and polarized or unpolarized. These fashion shades range in

price from RRP \$145 to about \$300 for the top-of-the-range model which also includes a wooden storage-box and 'custom-case'.

#### For a hard-earned thirst

About the same size as a normal drinking-mug, the *Allantis Water Purifier* is a top-of-the-range cup which renders water that has been contaminated with bacteria, parasites and viruses safe for drinking. The cup can purify well over 3500 litres of water, enough to satisfy most bushwalkers' requirements. The cup was initially developed for NASA's space-shuttle missions, and has been tested by America's Environmental

Protection Agency. The cup is made by the US company *Questech International* and is distributed in Australia by *Tanico Australia*. It sells for \$69.95.

#### Bevel that base edge

Australian company *Kaap Enterprises*, distributor of *SKS ski-tuning* products, supplied us with information on its products, some of which may be important for cross-country skiers. The *SKS Racing Combi edge-sharpener* will be of most relevance for XCD skiers. Having good edges on XCD skis is important for maintaining control and allowing efficient carved turns. This tool

## TRIX

### Maintaining stoves in the field

Keeping the choof in your choofer, by *John Chapman*

While liquid-fuel stoves have become very popular and are essential to use in some areas, many readers do not know how to use them safely and how to repair them in the field.

The most common problems are blocked jets. Usually a 'pricker', which is a fine piece of wire, is used to clean the jet. What this does is push the carbon and dirt back into the fuel-feed pipe. While this normally fixes the problem, it is only temporary as the blockage can easily re-enter the jet. To fix the blockage properly, it is necessary to remove the jet before cleaning. For most stoves, you need a spanner to do that. If the spanner is either lost or unavailable, a set of aluminium billy grips can be used as a wrench. The jet needs to be held close to the hinge and this can be facilitated by filing the circular hole into a hexagon. (Mine was modified with some desperate but gentle persuasion in the field.) When screwing the jet back, it is only necessary to nip it shut gently. No real force is needed.

Another hint to improve the efficiency of most stoves in windy conditions: While stoves like the MSR's and Coleman's already operate well under wind, many other models are badly affected. Some people bring stoves inside for cooking but I have never used a stove inside a nylon tent. The risk of an accidental bump or flare-up which can result in a destroyed tent is too great. There is also a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

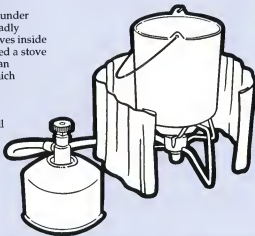
All stoves work perfectly well in the rain; the only problem is performance in wind.

Wind-guards can be effectively fashioned out of aluminium window-flashing. This material is cheap and quite flexible. The stove design must be considered as most are not designed to

have their fuel tanks heated excessively. A wind-guard also forms an excellent reflector of heat which improves performance. For Shellite stoves such as Optimus a half-circle of aluminium on the windward side works well, keeping the worst of the wind off while allowing plenty of cooling air to flow around the tank. Stoves which use sealed containers of liquid gas must never be heated excessively.

If a wind-guard is to be used, it is essential that a horizontal plate of aluminium be placed between the burner head and the fuel tank, similar to that used on MSR stoves. This should be placed over the burner head during assembly. It is then reasonably safe to use a wind-guard round three-quarters of the stove. Always allow a wide open region for cooling air to enter and for a ready oxygen supply. Aluminium flashing is available from many timber and building suppliers or from a friendly builder on a building site. ■

*Wild welcomes readers' contributions to this section; payment is at our standard rate. Send to the address at the end of this department.*



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## EQUIPMENT

enables the user to bevel the base edge, sharpen and bevel the side edge, and roughen the edge a little so that it 'cuts' effectively. RRP \$259. Kaap Enterprises is also the distributor for a number of cross-country ski waxes.



Source Monsoon-belt, top, and Classic money-belts.

### Belt-up

Also from Source, the maker of Trek sandals (mentioned above), is a selection of *money-belts*, ideal for trekkers and travellers. The *Classic* has three compartments for credit cards, currency and passports, and is adjustable. The *Monsoon-belt* is sealed with touch-tape and has two compartments large enough to hold currency and passports; one compartment is entirely waterproof. It, too, is adjustable. Pocket dimensions for the *Classic* and *Monsoon-belt* are 12 x 24 centimetres. The *Monsoon-case* is a smaller version of the *Monsoon-belt*. It, too, has two compartments, one waterproof, but has a strap, rather than a belt, so it can be hung round the neck. The three belts are light tan in colour and sell for \$21, \$29 and \$25.50, respectively. Trek products are distributed by Nomad Travel Equipment.

### Free-heel news

It may be a bit late for most cross-country skiers but DB Biggs, an Australian distributor of ski equipment, has sent us information on many products.

The *Classic* and *Team 610* are roller-skis from *SwedSki*. The *Classic*, suited to the beginner, has wide wheels for stability and a patented reverse-wheel brake for good grip. RRP \$360. The *Team 610* is for the more experienced and is lighter and more versatile than the *Classic*. It also has rubber wheels and a reverse brake so that skating and classic techniques can be used. RRP \$390.

*Climbing skins* are not unknown to cross-country skiers, but *Ascension Enterprises* has come up with some unique concepts in skins. The *Kicker* skins are small, light and easy to use, and fit under the 'kicker' area of the ski. Since they only cover a portion of the ski, they still allow you to glide while providing good grip on uphills. Approximate price is \$139. The *3/4 Length* skins have been designed for steep ascents. Two nylon-webbing touch-tape straps keep the skin centred. These skins come in sizes to fit touring skis and the wider Telemark skis and sell for around \$172. (See Wild Ideas, starting on page 35.) ■

New products (on loan to *Wild*) and/or information about them, including colour slides, are welcome for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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Trevor Willis treats his boots with Nikwax during the 1992 MATHO KANGRI EXPEDITION



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### 2 AQUEOUS NIKWAX WATERPROOFING FOR LEATHER

A concentrated liquid water-based emulsion of the active ingredients of Nikwax Waterproofing Wax.



**Usage:** Like the Waterproofing Wax, but can also be used for ordinary town shoes because it will give a shine.

**Key Advantage:** Because Aqueous Nikwax is water-based, it can be applied to wet or dry leather so you do not need to dry out your boots before treating them — a major advantage in a backpacking situation.

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**Usage:** For all Nubuck and Suede-based footwear, including combinations with fabrics.

**Key Advantage:** Nubuck

Waterproofing combines maximum waterproofing with minimum effect upon the appearance of Nubuck and Suede.

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A liquid wax which cleans, softens and waterproofs leather.



**Usage:** For softening up new boots and shoes; for cleaning, waterproofing and revitalizing dry leather. To remove excess deposits of dirt and wax which may build up over time.

**Key Advantage:** Because of its polymeric properties Liquid Nikwax is able to soften without enlarging pores, and so — unlike leather oils and greases — it does not harm the waterproof qualities of leather.

### BOOTS WITH WATERPROOF LININGS...

Don't forget that the useful life of the uppers on all boots will be extended if they are protected with a Nikwax waterproofing product. Furthermore Nikwax products reduce water uptake, thus avoiding weight gain and loss of insulation.

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# GUIDING LIGHTS

Walking, trekking and paddling guidebooks

## BOOKS

### The Hume and Hovell Walking Track Guidebook

by Harry Hill (Crawford House Press, 1993, RRP \$19.95).

The Hume and Hovell Track is an important new long-distance walking track that stretches across a large part of southern New South Wales. It was constructed largely as a bicentennial project organized by the New South Wales Department of Lands and opened in 1988. It follows the route taken by the two explorers very closely and goes from Wee Jasper (near Yass) to near Albury. This is a distance of 310 kilometres. Part of the track goes along existing forestry and fire roads but nearly half was newly constructed and marked. The track leads through country of considerable scenic appeal and of interest to bushwalkers.

The track can be walked in its entirety (for most walkers this would take a bit over two weeks) or in shorter sections. The author recommends walks ranging from half-day to five-day walks which cover some of the most enjoyable and scenic parts. Hill also provides useful details on access, telephone numbers for transport links, where food can be obtained, campsites, availability of water, and so on.

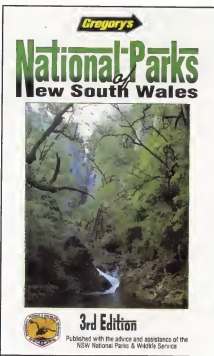
Given a track that follows the route of explorers, it is appropriate that historical aspects have been emphasized (and there is a lot of rural history and information on old mines). Other points of interest are also included.

As well as detailed notes and attractive photographs, the whole walk is represented by a series of strip maps based on topographic maps. These show the track, the explorers' actual route, places where wild flowers can be seen, the underlying rock type and good vantage points—all very useful information.

The track is close to Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra and deserves to be better known. This guidebook is a good start.

David Noble

**Gregory's National Parks of NSW**  
edited by James Young (Gregory's third edition 1992, RRP \$18.95).



New South Wales is fortunate in having a fairly extensive system of National Parks and other reserves. This is the third edition of a

guidebook which gives basic details of 75 (that is, most) National Parks, State recreational areas, 11 nature reserves and 11 historic sites. The information it provides for each reserve varies ranging from historical perspectives to geology and vegetation. However, for every one it tells the user how to get there and what sort of activities are available. Most of this information is similar to that found in the hand-outs one can obtain from district National Park Offices but it is very convenient to have information about a lot of parks in one publication.

This book would be very useful to groups doing a car tour of some of the lesser-known parks in the State. They could plan much of the tour from home and know in advance what to expect when they arrive at individual parks. For those who want something more comprehensive, there is the National Parks Association of New South Wales *Guide to National Parks of Northern NSW* (see review in *Wild* no 45). I hope that the proposed southern guide will be available soon. Unfortunately, there is no guide as yet that covers all the (nearly 200) nature reserves in the State.

DN

**White Water Nepal—A Rivers Guidebook for Rafting and Kayaking**  
by David Allardice and Peter Knowles (Rivers Publishing, 1992, RRP \$29.95).

Nepal is a real paddlers' paradise, and this is a great book to introduce new paddlers to the area as well as give hardened veterans ideas for further challenges.

David Allardice and Peter Knowles have spent a lot of time in Nepal over many years, but they have also drawn on the expertise of several other knowledgeable paddlers. Twenty-two rivers are reviewed, many easy grade-two and three as well as the more notorious high-altitude 'devil' runs.

They have put together some interesting ideas for tours, from a 'softies special', an easy 19 days of grade-two-three to the 'asset stopper', 27 days of aquatic bedlam set to stir even the most undaunted.

There is a strong sense of humour throughout the book, a fair bit of history, there are some excellent cartoons, lots of anecdotes and some good photos. The map of each river is accurate and well drawn, and descriptions are informative and lively.

A must for Nepal freaks; even if you can't afford to get there, the book is a great buy.

John Wilde

**Karakoram Highway—The High Road to China**  
by John King (Lonely Planet, second edition 1993, RRP \$19.95).

As an avid user of Lonely Planet guides, and in particular of the 1989 edition of this volume,

The Department of Lands has published a series of brochures that cover most of the walk but it is good to see this comprehensive guidebook published. The author, Harry Hill, is a retired teacher who was born and has lived a long time in Hume and Hovell country. He is an active bushwalker and researcher. This guidebook has obviously been a labour of love over many years. Hill was closely associated with the track's construction and was among the first to walk it fully.

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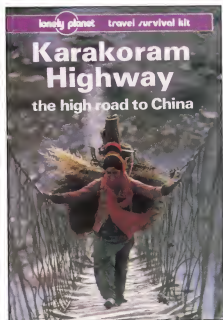
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I commend this book to would-be travellers of the Karakoram Highway. The book is crisply written, logically segmented and easy to approach.

This edition has an extra 100 or so pages—mainly containing more options on places to stay, an expanded section on Gilgit and environs, greater detail and maps on Skardu and the Swat and Kaghan valleys, and the welcome expansion of the Murree and Taxila sections.



The maps are excellent, and sharper than before. The addition of a key on some of the town maps, at the same orientation as the map labelling, and the inclusion of insets rather than extending maps on to a second page, have made the book easier to use. The geology section, as in the last edition, is very comprehensive. I would have liked to see the new fauna and flora section written in similar detail.

The boxed inserts highlighting important addresses, abbreviations and particularly the new cycling information are excellent additions. The section on cultural cues is critical. It, too, should be highlighted. More could have been added to the section on women travellers—preferably written by women travellers.

I was dismayed, however, to note that the book section had not been updated to include reference to important contemporary books on the Pakistan scene, notably by Richard Reeves, Emma Duncan, Benazir Bhutto and Christina Lamb.

My greatest concern are the far too casual comments in the brief references to trekking. A traveller with only this book as a guide could be misled by statements such as 'light shoes for all but long or snowy treks'. The three-day optional 'wander' up to the Molungtun Glacier reads like a mere stroll. This is alarming. And there is no mention of the Westerners who casually trek into the Passu Glacier bordering the Karakoram Highway each year without a guide, never to return. In contrast, the addition of warnings

with regard to regions of sectarian violence is vital and very timely.

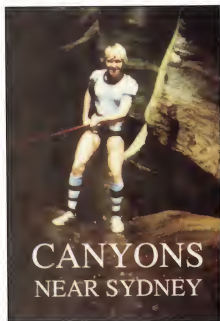
Judy Parker

## Canyons Near Sydney

by Rick Jamieson (published by the author, 1992, RRP \$5.00).

The exhilarating beauty and cloistered atmosphere of the Blue Mountains canyons are well known to walkers, with most clubs running abseil/canyon programmes during the summer.

*Canyons Near Sydney* provides both an accurate guide for the more experienced, and much important information for those newer to this exciting activity. Despite Jamieson's comments on perceived target audience, I suspect that bushwalkers will be the major beneficiaries of this guide. All the popular—and some less known—canyons are covered, but fittingly this book leaves most of the more remote canyons alone. [Not everyone agrees! See *Wildfire*. Editor] Another pleasing aspect is that many 'easy' canyons are described for the benefit of the less committed.



A comprehensive and sorely needed overview of safety aspects, necessary gear, abseil techniques and important requirements is provided as are many useful hints. Individual route descriptions appear to be accurate, with detail given to access and exit routes, anchor points and relative gradings. The guide reflects both Jamieson's expertise and his experience.

A disappointing aspect is the minimal emphasis on how people should look after these precious and fragile places. A more pointed reference to sudden floods that have caused fatalities would also have been relevant.

Overall, though, *Canyons Near Sydney* is a fine publication which covers all the important points and will prove a much-appreciated guide. It is easy to read, of convenient pocket-size, and is well supplemented by some inspiring photographs.

Andrew Menk

## Bushwalks in the Sydney Region, Volume 2

edited by S Lord and G Daniel (National Parks Association of New South Wales, 1993, RRP \$17).

The National Parks Association has published its second book of track notes for bushwalks around Sydney. The walk descriptions have been compiled by NPA members. Proceeds go to the association's conservation projects.

The book describes 82 bushwalks with a focus on coastal and Blue Mountains walks. Most of the walks are of easy to medium grade with ten medium-hard walks, including Kanangra to Katoomba and Katoomba to Mittagong.

The walks described in the Kanangra wilderness have an excessive amount of detail for a wilderness area. The authors would have done well to use Charles Warner's excellent *Bushwalking in Kosciusko National Park* as a guide to the level of information which should be provided. Wilderness walking should be concerned with self-reliance and the challenge of finding one's own way in difficult country; step-by-step instructions are not necessary.

The authors' use of quaint language and reference to outmoded techniques say something about the age of NPA's bushwalkers. The maps continue the amateurish style of *Volume 1* but at least the drawings have been dropped.

Unfortunately, there are many references to cairns whose existence was temporary. The information on Narrow Neck is out of date; the water-pipe near the southern end is no longer functional; obtain water from a small pool in a ditch along the track.

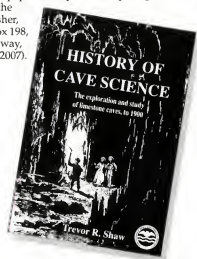
Given the NPA's role in protecting natural areas and promoting wilderness conservation, the lack of information on minimal-impact bushwalking and wilderness ethics is surprising. The book could also benefit from more discussion of past conservation battles which protected the walk areas.

The easier walks are well described and provide a useful guide for beginners and family groups. Such people should have many enjoyable hours experiencing the walks included in this book.

Roger Lembit

## History of Cave Science

by Trevor Shaw (Sydney Speleological Society, 1992, RRP \$59.90 [hardback], \$49.40 [paperback], plus \$7.00 postage, from the publisher, PO Box 198, Broadway, NSW 2007).



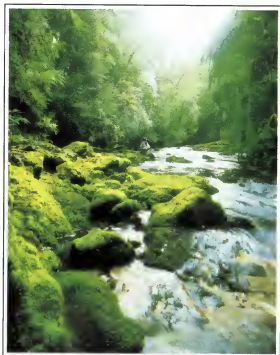
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## Oliver Trickett 1847-1934

by Gregory Middleton (Sydney Speleological Society, 1992, RRP \$29.50 plus \$5.00 postage, from the publisher).

It is hard to imagine cave science before the invention of the atomic theory. Theories nevertheless existed to explain cave formation and the growth of calcite decorations, amongst other things. Trevor Shaw's incredibly detailed and interesting book comprehensively outlines the evolution of thought in this area.



It is almost a chronicle of debunked scientific theory and makes fascinating reading. It is illustrated with reproductions of many old pen-sketches of the type that you would expect to bear captions such as 'Here Be Dragons'. This manuscript grew from Shaw's PhD thesis and only 150 copies were printed for those who love esoteric science. Thanks to the Sydney Speleological Society and its policy of publishing occasional papers, it has seen the light of day again.

*Oliver Trickett 1847-1934* is another Sydney Speleological Society occasional paper. It is a credit to Greg Middleton and the triumphs of desk-top publishing. This book, too, is well researched and again it is illustrated with an exhaustive collection of lovely old maps. To read about the achievements of Oliver Trickett—including the complete survey of Jenolan Caves and almost every other major cave in New South Wales—is a humbling experience for any caver. Books like this make you realize just how little some of us achieve in a lifetime.

Stephen Bunton

## Smuggled—The Underground Trade in Australia's Wildlife

by Raymond Hoser (Apollo Books, 1993, RRP \$18.95).

This book will ruffle feathers. It has already triggered an inquiry into the operations of the New South Wales National Parks & Wildlife Service by the Independent Commission

Against Corruption. Allegations of widespread and serious corruption among Australia's wildlife authorities are among the more disturbing aspects of this highly readable book.

Hoser draws together information from personal experience, informants, reports by investigative journalists, circumstantial evidence, and police and court records to weave a convincing and disturbing picture of illegal trafficking. He focuses on case-studies to explain the different types of smuggling activities, who is willing to pay enormous sums of money for Australian wildlife, and for what reasons.

Hoser seeks to demonstrate that illegal trade in wildlife is a problem because of restrictive export laws coupled with equally restrictive and complicated laws relating to the keeping and trading of wildlife within Australia. This has produced a climate which encourages official corruption rather than conservation. It is difficult to argue with his central thesis: 'Legalizing the \$A400 million per annum wildlife industry will reduce government corruption and provide better protection for endangered species.'

The problem with a book like this is that public inquiries into individual allegations readily divert attention from the central issue—the need for extensive review of wildlife laws. Thousands of birds, mammals and reptiles are illegally exported each year, resulting in the near-extinction of some species. It is absurd that some, such as the palm cockatoo and the parma wallaby which are now rare and endangered in Australia, are prolific captive breeders overseas as a result of their illegal export to foreign collectors. Yet their importation back to Australia is prohibited under the current law. Also, birds and animals which are shot as pests, such as galahs and kangaroos, are sought after by collectors overseas.

Raymond Hoser is involved and driven. A private keeper of reptiles, Hoser claims harassment (violent raids and false charges) by wildlife authorities who control licensing. He presents himself as David against the Goliath of illegal trade and corruption. *Smuggled* is his stone.

Sara White

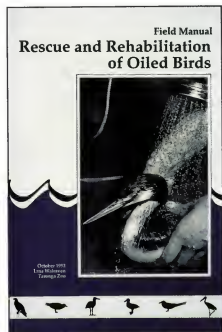
## Rescue and Rehabilitation of Oiled Birds—Field Manual

by Erna Valraven (Torongra Zoo, 1992, RRP \$30 plus \$8.00 postage and handling, from Torongra Zoo, PO Box 20, Mosman, NSW 2088).

Assuming that it is worth trying to save birds affected by oil spills, this is a splendid book. Though aimed at a New South Wales audience, much of what it says can be applied universally. Nor is it relevant only to oiled birds—there are useful sections on mending fractures and bird diseases. The great achievement of this book is its balance: not too detailed to be unreadable, but sufficiently comprehensive—even to the extent of giving the addresses of suppliers of specialized equipment—for treatment to be given without the need to look elsewhere. Marina Bishop of Torongra Ink deserves special mention for a layout and design that should be an example to anyone wishing to make technical

information accessible. The book's spaciousness and simplicity brilliantly complement the spare, prescriptive text.

My one qualm is about the initial assumption. If the vast amount of energy



spent on attempting to rehabilitate oiled birds were directed to the sort of political action needed to reduce the number of oil spills, far more birds would be saved. Attempted rehabilitation is largely, as this book admits, for humanitarian reasons; that is, it makes humans feel good. Alas, the majority of the 'rehabilitated' birds must surely die after short and wretched lives. At least with this book the birds have a slightly better chance of fulfilling survival.

Stephen Garnett

## Standing Up for Your Local Environment—An Action Guide

by Jenny Barnett (Victorian National Parks Association, third edition 1993, RRP \$15 plus \$2.00 postage, from VNPA, 10 Parliament Pl, East Melbourne, Vic 3002).

Large organizations are constantly involved in the major conservation issues, but often individuals or small groups will become aware of a problem that is of great importance to their local environment and be willing to take a stand. Such battles frequently have to be undertaken without wider support, and anyone who has been involved in one of these struggles will know the bureaucratic maze that leads to a planning appeal hearing or perhaps on to an appeal to the minister. Inexperience can often lose a case purely through people's ignorance of their rights or of the process of appeal.

For such people, *Standing Up for Your Local Environment* is an action guide of blissful clarity. The main body of the book is divided into three parts, each of which has several sections. A table at the beginning helps the reader to identify his or her concern, and then points to the relevant sections. The layout is easy to follow; the language used is plain,

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straightforward English; and the information given is to the point, with both 'how' and 'why' well covered. The references are Victorian, so the book is of specific use to Victorians, but the procedures and general hints for action would be useful to anyone wondering where to start in a confrontation with local authority over disturbing development.

Jenny Barnett has compiled a 'user-friendly' guide for all concerned individuals who want



to be able to influence the outcome of environmental and planning issues in their neighbourhood. Veronica Holland has illustrated throughout with gentle humour, wickedly having fun at the expense of all protagonists.

Patricia Liedloff

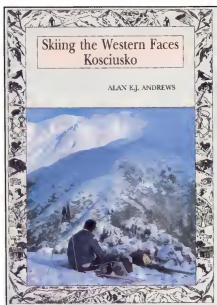
**Skiing the Western Faces—Kosciusko**  
by Alan Andrews (Tabletop Press, 1993, RRP \$34.95).

The Western Faces are the slopes of the Main Range of the Snowy Mountains, New South Wales, which drain into the Gehi River—they are the longest and (often) the steepest skiable slopes in Australia. Well-known Snowy Mountains writer Elyne Mitchell (the subject of an article in *Wild* no 38) first wrote about these fantastic runs in her book *Australia's Alps* in 1942.

While not strictly a book of track notes, *Skiing the Western Faces* can probably be used as such though it provides genuine enjoyment for armchair skiers as well. It opens with a foreword from Elyne Mitchell and continues with a series of chapters, each devoted to a different section of the Western Faces. Andrews 'takes' you skiing down the runs with a combination of anecdotal and descriptive information—his personal experiences skiing these areas feature prominently.

The book itself is a hardback of over 150 pages, liberally printed with good-quality black-and-white photographs, maps, diagrams and poems (by the author himself).

While I have skied only a few of the Western Face runs, I have always wanted to spend time 'bagging' a few more of them, and reading



*Skiing the Western Faces—Kosciusko* has only increased my impatience to do so.

Glenn van der Kniff

#### FILMS

##### Cliffhanger

Directed by Renny Harlin and starring Sylvester Stallone.

A plane-load of heavily armed baddies crash-lands in the Colorado mountains. The gang forces two climbing guides (played by Stallone and Michael Rooker) to lead them to the location of three cases, each containing millions of dollars. What follows is an often violent, ridiculously far-fetched, action-packed adventure—all the hallmarks of box-office success. Much of the film is shot in the Italian Dolomites, with about 30 climbers contributing to the many spectacular climbing scenes; one involves a spine-chilling 120 metre free-fall. Stallone's stunt doubles are played by well-known climbers Wolfgang Güllich and Ron Kauk. Despite the many technical inconsistencies, *Cliffhanger* is above average, exciting entertainment. Go grab some popcorn and enjoy the ride.

Glenn Tempest

#### PERIODICALS

##### The Tasmanian Tramp, no 29

edited by the Hobart Walking Club (Hobart Walking Club, 1993, RRP \$10.95).

The 'Tassie Tramp' is one of the enduring institutions of bushwalking literature. For mainland-based walkers it gives a good insight into walking in Tasmania and often suggests ideas for future walks. In some issues, articles have strayed somewhat from those of direct interest to bushwalking. It is good to see that the latest issue does in fact have a large number of articles on bushwalking. Of interest are those on the Central Plateau, Mt Bisdee, Federation Peak, Mt Anne and the Spires. Also, each issue of late has had a special theme—*Tramp* no 28 featured the Hartz Mountains, for example. This issue contains many articles about bushwalkers'

trips to the islands lying just off the coast of Tasmania.

For Tasmanian bushwalking addicts this *Tramp* is better than most.

DN

#### POSTERS

**Croajingolong—East Gippsland, Elebana Falls—Lamington National Park, Grass Trees—Great Dividing Range, Mitchell Falls—The Kimberley and Palm Grove—Eungella National Park**

by Robert Rankin (Rankin Publishers, 1992, RRP \$9.95 each).

Like all Rankin's posters, these five are attractive, well-printed and well-presented prints of Australian wilderness scenes. The approximate size of each poster is 68 x 100 centimetres.

Go

#### OTHER TITLES RECEIVED

**Arab Gulf States—Travel Survival Kit** by Gordon Robison (Lonely Planet, 1993, RRP \$21.95).

**Chile & Easter Island—**

**Travel Survival Kit** by Wayne Bernhardt (Lonely Planet, third edition 1993, RRP \$21.95).

**Fiji—Travel Survival Kit**

by Rob Kay (Lonely Planet, third edition 1993, RRP \$17.95).

**Hawaii—Travel Survival Kit**

by Glenda Bendure & Ned Friary (Lonely Planet, second edition 1993, \$24.95).

**Jordan and Syria—Travel Survival Kit**

by Hugh Finlay & Damien Simonis, second edition 1993, RRP \$19.95).

**Melbourne**

by Mark Armstrong (Lonely Planet, 1993, RRP \$11.95).

**Mongolia**

by Robert Storey (Lonely Planet, 1993, RRP \$17.95).

**Myanmar (Burma)—**

**A Travel Survival Kit** by Tony Wheeler and Joe Cummings (Lonely Planet, fifth edition 1993, RRP \$17.95).

**Pakistan—Travel Survival Kit**

by John King & David St Vincent (Lonely Planet, fourth edition 1993, RRP \$21.95).

**Poland—Travel Survival Kit**

by Krzysztof Dydyński (Lonely Planet, 1993, RRP \$24.95).

**Seoul—City Guide**

by Chris Taylor (Lonely Planet, 1993, RRP \$13.95).

**Solomon Islands**

by David Harcombe (Lonely Planet, second edition 1993, RRP \$19.95).

**Sri Lanka—Travel Survival Kit**

by John Noble et al (Lonely Planet, fifth edition 1993, RRP \$17.95).

**Tokyo—City Guide**

by Chris Taylor (Lonely Planet, 1993, RRP \$11.95).

**Vietnamese Phrasebook**

by Nguyen Xuan Thu (Lonely Planet, 1993, RRP \$7.95). ■

Publications for possible review are welcome. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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# DISABLED, LESBIAN HARP-SEAL

Cover-basher bashed

I write with reference to Andrew Barnes's letter in *Wild* no 49 regarding the way he found the cover photo of *Wild* no 48 'profoundly disturbing'.

What planet does this jerk come from?

While I am sure that the publishers of *Wild* are flattered in the knowledge that some readers study the magazine with such zeal, I wonder why we must suffer these painful ramblings of pseudo-sensitive driver?

Perhaps Andrew would prefer to see a scantily clad woman in the photo as well (to make it even); or possibly a disabled lesbian harp-seal thrown in for good measure would keep him happy. (So you wouldn't be seen as being discriminatory...)

One must surely marvel at where all this lunacy will finish.

After all, to select the cover photo is the prerogative of the editor of a magazine.

I enjoy reading (and subscribe to) your magazine as it covers most of the outdoor activities I enjoy, and provides me with useful information pertinent to my interests.

These ends are always reflected in the covers, which invariably show people enjoying themselves in a wilderness setting. The cover of *Wild* no 48 is no exception—technically a good photo (interesting reflection) showing a bushwalker rising to the challenge of a river-crossing. Something quite harmless, I would have thought...

David Hine  
Stafford, Qld

## The great indoors

I read with interest (*Wild* no 49, page 27) about the 'rebuilding' of Craig's Hut into a 'real hut' on Clear Hills near Mt Stirling, Victoria. My fiancée and I were unfortunate enough to encounter this rebuilt hut along with 50 intrepid four-wheel-drivers on a recent walk.

The hut's internal frame is most impressive (as demanded by the local building authorities) but the rest is sadly inadequate. The old Timbertop school rules still apply—feel free to stay in the hut, but ensure you've adequately pitched your four-season tent inside before turning in for the night. The dirt floor poses no problems to tent pegs, but you will be hard pushed to find a flat spot large enough for your tent.

Thankfully, the four-wheel-drivers were not too demanding—a nice view, a rough track and hopes that the air-conditioner wouldn't break down. And, yes, we were even lulled by distant strains of 'Jessica's Theme' from the CD player. Nothing like the great outdoors!

Brad Poyser  
Frankston, Vic

## Unserviced and unhappy

As a previously avid subscriber with the greatest respect for Mr Tempest, I find the style of the article 'Mt Featherthorpe' (*Wild* no 48) to be bland and unservicing.

It is unfortunate that on a sunny day, several years ago, from the summit and indeed from several stretches of the Ovens Highway a bright dome could be noticed. For those easily distracted, it could be noticed in a similar way to the corrugated-iron roofs in the valley; or trig points, pole lines or ski tows in the region.

Let me note that the hut has been repainted a dull green for the last 18 months, the task having been quite an operation, speaking on behalf of the rest of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club hut maintenance party involved in the cartage of much paint and many tools for the job...

David Rogers  
'Rarely in Melbourne', Vic

## Protest march

I am writing to protest in the strongest possible terms concerning the gross distortion of unsourced facts that appeared under the heading 'Frog march to extinction' in the Green Pages of *Wild* no 48.

The brief article charges that the Wet Tropics Management Agency is 'overseeing one of the biggest extinction events in Australia's post-European history' relating to the disappearance of six frog species from upland rain forests in the wet tropics region.

This statement is a laughable distortion of the actual events. Since its recent inception in 1991, the WTMA has taken a leading role in sponsoring research into the decline of upland rain-forest frogs. These efforts include:

- Allocation of \$57 000 in 1991 to Keith McDonald, a zoologist and frog specialist with the Queensland Department of Environment & Heritage...
- An allocation of \$2000 was made in 1991 for publication of a booklet...
- An additional allocation of \$19 000 was made to McDonald in 1992 to undertake monitoring of threatened frog populations...
- The WTMA will allocate more funds in the future to ensure that frog populations are monitored...
- The WTMA recently allocated \$18 000 to Michael Mahoney of the University of Newcastle to study two endangered dayfrogs...
- The WTMA also recently granted \$5000 to Michael Cunningham of the University of Queensland to study the genetics of threatened frogs...

The problem of declining frogs is a tragedy in the making. It is, however, a global trend and the reason(s) for the decline constitute an ecological mystery that has yet to be solved by researchers from any nation. To expect a small entity such as the WTMA to have solved this crisis since its brief inception only two years ago is patently unreasonable.

Peter Hitchcock, Director  
Wet Tropics Management Agency  
Cairns, Qld

*Wild's* correspondent for 'Frog march to extinction' comments:

1 The WTMA has an annual budget of some \$18 million, much of which is spent on administration and roads.

2 The figures quoted in Peter Hitchcock's letter are for three years' funding. The WTMA has spent only about \$30 000 on frogs each year.

3 After the *Wild* article was published, researcher Keith McDonald was offered more funds, and a 'frog recovery team' was formed. Editor

## Gutter press?

I read with interest a publication by Rick Jamieson titled *Canyons Near Sydney* [Reviewed in this issue. Editor] which appears to complement articles by David Noble in *Wild* nos 3 and 28 on Blue Mountains canyons.

I would have thought there to be sufficient information contained within these articles to satisfy the weekend canyonier. The additional information contained within Jamieson's guide appears to be somewhat irresponsible. Just as Australia's caves are gaining popularity, measures are being taken to protect them by restricting access. I would expect the same to apply to the canyons, which are another of nature's hidden treasures. Many of these have been protected by being remote—in the wilderness where the multitudes do not trek.

Since publication of the earlier canyon guides a significant increase in the numbers of people venturing into these wild and beautiful, yet potentially dangerous, places has occurred. This has also led to an increase in the need for rescue services. Many lives have been lost in canyons (Grand, Clastral, Arethusa, Kanangra and Bungoino, to name a few) not to mention the scores of call-outs for injuries and lost or overdue parties...

I realize a mere guide does not cause these accidents and geographic embarrassments, but guides do encourage more people to head off into wilderness areas where conditions are vastly more challenging and dangerous than in more accessible areas. Noble [See his guide in this issue. Editor] had the foresight to leave the wilderness areas undescribed so people could have that 'feeling of being the first'. Why couldn't Jamieson?...

Glen Robinson  
Beecroft, NSW

## Way rad magazine, man

There is too much bias creeping in on wilderness issues. The Wilderness Society radicals' section seems to be predominating...

Philp Whitehead  
Dilston, Tas

Readers' letters are welcome (with sender's full name and address, for verification). A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Write to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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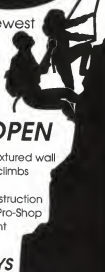
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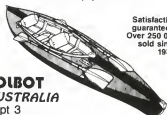
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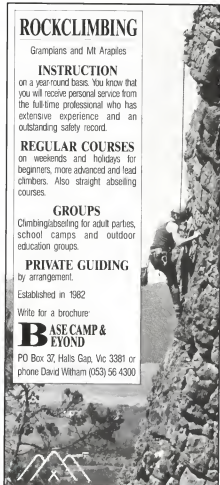
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**Kathmandu Pty Ltd**  
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**Adventure activities**

**Australian Capital Territory**

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Katoomba 2780  
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**Blue Mountains Adventure Company**  
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South Hurstville 2221  
Ph (02) 547 2155

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Sydney 2001  
Ph 285 2665 or 008 267 999

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Jindabyne 2627  
Ph (064) 56 1601

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Jindabyne 2627  
Ph (064) 56 2966

**Wildwater Adventures**  
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Bonville 2441  
Ph (066) 53 4469

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Darlinghurst 2010  
Ph (02) 360 2099

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**Willis's Walkabouts**  
12 Carrington St  
Millner 0810  
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Thor Adventure Travel  
228 Rundle St  
Adelaide 5000  
Ph (08) 232 3155

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Devonport 7310  
Ph (04) 24 7833

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Wilmot 7310  
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Nattamook 3409  
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Ph (03) 690 5455

Bogong Jack Adventures  
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178 Moorabool St  
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Mountain Recreation Ltd  
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The only way to belay! Martin Kennedy toasts Kurt Stüwe's progress on a climb in Onkaparinga Gorge, in McLaren Vale, South Australia.  
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*Wild* welcomes slides for this page; payment is at our standard rate. Send to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181

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